THE OLD ENGLISH EXODUS

TEXT, TRANSLATION, AND COMMENTARY

BY

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EDITED BY

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

This work is based on full notes for a series of lectures delivered to a specialist class in the 1930s and 1940s; the notes were retouched in the following decade. It was never intended as an edition, although the lecturer scrupulously drew up an edited text as the basis of his commentary. It is an interpretation of the poem, designed to reconstruct the original (as far as that is possible), and to place it in the context of Old English poetry.

I have abbreviated the commentary systematically. Tolkien himself left the work unfinished, with such variants as may be selected at need. It should be remembered that these lectures were never prepared for formal delivery; they represent rather the discourse of a teacher among a small group of pupils, expressing his understanding of the text in the circumstances of that time. It is impossible to re-create this situation; the attempt could only be tedious and confusing. So diffuse comments and some basic instruction have been reduced: such as observations on phonology and morphology, which are now succinctly presented in standard works (as, for instance, Campbell's *Old English Grammar*). Also, I have excluded palaeographical description that is by now irrelevant or mistaken. What remains is essential to the argument, although it may seem old-fashioned. Tolkien's strictures on the editorial practices of Blackburn and Sedgefield are likewise unnecessary, since their only purpose was to remove obstacles that do not now exist. Tolkien would have used the editions of E. B. Irving (1953; corrections and additions 1972, 1974) and P. J. Lucas (1977) if they had been available. The second of these acknowledges the influence of Tolkien's lectures, and adopts two of his emendations.

I have retained Tolkien's transposition of lines 93–107, 108–24 (following Gollancz, 1927), although there is no way of explaining such a displacement in the present state of our knowledge. This rearrangement is an essential part of his understanding of the poem; and the clarification it offers has
not been equalled by editors who keep strictly to the conventions of modern scholarship.

It should be clear that I have not aimed to preserve material of purely historic interest. Tolkien deserves better than this, for he showed his pupils that the prime purpose of edition and commentary is to free the text from obscurity. If I had not regarded his work as valid here and now, I should not have undertaken the task of editing it. Any necessary observations of my own are enclosed in square brackets. In six instances I have added a brief note to clarify or supplement a point. The bibliography consists principally of those authorities on which Tolkien based his text; the editions of Irving and Lucas are included because I have occasion to refer to them once or twice.

I am deeply grateful to the Trustees of the Tolkien Estate for the opportunity they have given me to edit this material, and for the confidence they have shown in my judgement. The staff of Oxford University Press have guided me through the many difficulties that arose, and shown unfailing helpfulness. Above all, I salute the memory of an inspiring teacher.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEXT WITH VARIANTS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NOTE TO TRANSLATION</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANSLATION</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMMENTARY</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEX</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Hwæt we feor and neah gefrigen habbað
ofrer middangeard Moyses domas
wræticalo wordriht wreca cneorissum—
in uprodor eadigra gehwam
5 æfter bealusiðe bote lifes,
likely dæ gehwam langsumne ræd—
hælæðum secgan: gehyre se ðe wille!
Þone on westenne weroda Drehten,
soðfæst Cyning, mid his sylfes miht
gewyrdode, and him wundra fela
ece Alwalda in æht forgeaf.
He wæs leof Gode leoda aldor,
horsc and hreðergleaw herges wisæ,
from folctoga. Faraones cyn,
Godes andscæn, gyrdwite band.
Pær him gesæalde sigera Waldend
modgum magoræswan his maga feorh,
onwist cðæles Abrahames sunum.
Heah wæs þæt handlæan, and him hold Frêa
gesæalde wæpna geweald wið wræðra gryre;
ofercom mid þy campe cneomaga fela,
feonda folcriht. Þæ wæs forma sið
þæt hine weroda God wordum nægde,
þær he him gesægde soðwundra fela,
20 hu pas woruld worhte wittig Drehten,
corðan ymbhwyrft and uprodor
gesætte sigerice, and his sylfes naman,
ðone ylda bearn ær ne cuðon,
frod fædera cyn, þeah hie fela wiston.

Readings suggested independently by Tolkien are denoted T.

P. 143 begins HWÆT WE FEOR 7 NEAH with ornamental H hab-
bað] habbað MS 3 wræticalo] wræclico MS 8 weroda] weroða MS
14 from Kluge] frem MS 15 andscæn] -saca MS 17 magor-
æswan] -wum MS 22 feonda written twice MS 28 ylda
-ð MS
Hæfdæ he þa geswined ðætum cæftum
and gewurðodne werodes aldor,
Faraones feond, on forðwegas,
þæ was ungeara ealdum witan
deþæ gedreccead dihtfolca mæst—
hordweardæ hryre heaf wege geniwad,
swæfon seledeamæs since berofene;
hæfde manseæda æt middere niht
frecne gefyllæd frumbearna gehwylc,
abroocene burhweardæs. Bana wide scrað,
lað leodhata. Land drysmode
deádra hraewum. Dugoð forð gewat—
wop was wide, worulddreada lyt;
wæron hleahtarstmiðum handa belocene;
alyfed laðsið leode gretan—
folc ferende. Feond weas bereafod.
Hergas onheldon—heof þider becom—
drunon deofolgyld. Ægæ was mære
ofor middangeard þa seo mengeo for;
swa þæs facen dreah fela missera
ealdwerigra Egypta folc,
þæs þe hie widereð wyran þohton
Moyses magum, gif hie Metod lete,
on langne lust leofes sîdes.
Fyrd weas gefysed; from se ðe laedde,
modig magoræswa, mægburh heora.
Oferfor he mid þy folce fæstenna worn,
land and leodweard laðra manna,
enge anpaðas, uncud gelad,
oð þæt hie on guðmyrc gearwe bæron.
Wæron land heora lyfhtelmæ bepaht,
mearchofu morheald. Moyses ofer þa

felamodigra fyrde gelæddde.
Heht þa ymb twa niht tirfsæste hæleð,
siððan hie feondum offaren hæsdon,
ymbwicigean werodes bearhtme
mid ælfære Æthanæs byrig,
mægnes mæste, mearclandum on.
Nearwe geneðdon on norðwegas;
wiston him be suðan Sigelwarena land,
Forbærned beorh-hleðu, brune leode
hatum heofoncolum. Þær halig God
wið færbyrne folc gescylde,
bælce oferbrædde byrnende heofon,
halgan nette hatwendne lyft.

Hæfde wederwolcen widum fæðum
eordan and uprodor æfre gedæled,
lædde leodwerod; ligfyrr adranc
hate heofontorht. Hæleð wafedon
drihta gedrymost. Dægsceldes hleo
wand ofer wolcnum; hæfde witig God
sunnan siðfæt segle ofertolden,
swa þa maestrapas men ne cuðon,
ne ða seglrode gescon meahton
eorduende ealle cæfte,
hu afæstnod wæs feldhusa mæst.
Siððan He mid wuldre geweorðode
þeodenholde, þa wæs brídde wic
golce to frofre. Fryrd call geseah
hu þær hlifiedon halige seglas,
lytwundor leoth; leode ongeton,
dugod Æræhela, þæt þær Drihten cwom,
weroda Waldend, wicsteal metan.
Æfenna gehwam ofer wundor
yllic æfter sunnan settræde bebead
ofe leodwerum lige scinan,
byrنهnde beam. Blace stodon
ofe sceotendum scire leoman.
Scinon scylhreðan. Sceado swiðeredon.
Næowle nihtscuwan neah ne mihton
heolstor ahydan. Heofoncandel barn.
Niwe nihtweard nyde sceolde
wician ofer weredum, þy læs him westengryre,
har hæðstapa, holmegum wederum
on færclamme ferhð getwæsfe.
Hæfde forengæga fyrene loccas,
blace beamas; bælegsan hweop
in þam hereþcreate hatan lige
þæt he on westenne werod forbærnde,
nymðæ hie modhwate Moyses yrde.
Him beforan foran fyr and wolcen
in beorhtroder, beamas twegen,
þæra æghwæðer efngedælde
heahþegnunga haliges gastes,
deornodra sið, dagum and nihtum.
Þæc on morgen gefrægn modes rofan
hebban herebyman hludan stefnum,
wildres woman. Werod eall aras,
modigra mægen, swa him Moyses bebead,
mære magoræswa, Metodes folce.
Fus fyrdgetrum forð gesawon
lifes latþeow lyftweg metan.
Segl side weold; sæmen æfter
foron flodwege. Fölc wæs on salum,
hlud herges cyrm. Heofonbeacen astah;
scean scir werod, scyldas lixtan.
Gesawon randwigan rihete stræte,
segn ofer sweotum, oð þæt sæfæsten
landes æt ende leodmægne forstod,
fus on forðweg. Fyrdwic aras.

wyrtton hic weriegie—wiste genægdon
modige meteþegnas—hyra mægen betton;
bræddon æfter beorgum, siðdan byme sang,
flotan feldhusum. Þa wæs feorðe wic,
randwigena ræst, be þan Readan Sæ.

Dæ on fyrd hyra færspell becwom,
oht inlende. Egsan stodon,
wælgyre weroda. Wræcmon gebad
laðne lastweard, se ðe him lange ær
eðelleasum onnied gescraf,
wean witum fæst—wære ne gymdon,
ðeah þe se yldra cyning ær ge<sealde> . . .

* * *

ða wearð yrfeawerd ingefolces
manna æfter madmun, þæt he swa miceles geðah.
Ealles þæs forgeton. Siðdan grame wurdon
Egypta cyn ymb andwige,
ða heo heora mægwinum mordor fremedon;
wohht berenodon, ware fræton,
wareon heðowsylmas heortan getenge,
mihtmod wera. Manum treowum
woldon hic þæt feorhlean facne gyldan,
þætte hic þæt dægweorc dreore gebohte
Moyeses leode, þær him mihtig God
on ðam spildside spede forgefe.
Þa him eorla mod ortrywe wearð,
siðdan hic gesawon of suðwegum
fyrd Faraonis ford on gangan,
ceorforholt wegan, eored liexan,
Hropon herefugolas, hildegrædig
deawegeðera, ofer drihtneum,
wonn wælceæsega; wulfas sungon
atol æfenleoð ætes on wenan,
carlesan deor cwyldrof beodon
on laðra last leodomægnæs fyll.
Hropon mearcweardæs middum nihtum;
flæh fæge gæst—foic wæs gehæged!
Hwilm of þam werode wlanca þegnas
mæton milpaðæs meara bogum.
Him þær sigecyning wið þone segn foran
manna þengel mearcþreatæ rad,
guðweard gumena grimhelm gespeon
cyning cinberge—cumbol lixtæn—
wiges on wenum, wælhlæncan sceoc;
het his hereciste healdan georne
fæst fyrdgetrum. Freond on segon
laðum eagan landmannæ cyme.
Ymb hine <wapn> wægon wigend unforhte,
hare heoruwulfas hilde greeton
burstige þæcwiges, þeodenholde.
Hæfde him alesene leoda dugeðe
tireadigra twa þusendo—
þæt wæron cyningas and cneowmægas
on þæt ealde riht ædelum deore.
Fordon anra gehwilc ut alædde
wærpnedcynnes wigan æghwilcne
bara þe he on þam fyrmte findan mihte;
wæron ingemen ealle ætædæere
cyninges on cordre. Cuð oft gebead
horn on heape to hwæs hægstealdmen,
guðþreat gumena, gearwe bæron.
Swa þær eorp werod ec on læddon,
lað æfter laðum, leodmægnes worn;
þusendmælum þider wæron fuse.
Hæfdon hie gemynted mægenheapum
to þam ærdæge Israhela cynn
billum abreotan on hyra broðorgyld.

For þon wæs in wicum wop up ahafen,
atol æfenleod—egesan stodon;
weredon wælnet; þa se woma cwom,
flugon frecne spell; feond wæs anmod,
werud wæs wigblac—od þæt wlance forsceaf
mihtig engel se da minigeo beheold,
þæt þær gelåde mid him leng ne mihton
geseon tosomne; sid wæs gedæled.
Hæfde nydfara nihtlangne fyrist,
þeah þe him on healfa gehwam hettend seomodon,
mægen ödde merestream. Nahton maran hwyrft,
waþron orwenan edelrihtes;
æton æfter beorgum in blacum reafum
wean on wenum. Wæccende bad
eall seo sibgedriht somod ætædæere
maran mægenes, ðð Moyses bebead
eorlas on uhttid ærnum hemum
folc somnigean, frecan arisan,
habban heora hlencan, hycgan on ellen,
beran beorht searo, beaconum cigean
sweit sande near. Snelle gemundon
weardas wigleod, werod wæs gefysed.
Brudon ofer beorgum (byman gehyrdon)

191 cyninges Bouterwek[2]—as MS, gebead Grein] gebad MS
194 ec
on T. ecan MS 197 P. 153 begins; P. 152 blank mægenheapum;
þam m. Cosijn[2] to þam m. MS 208 P. 154 begins
216 bemum
Thorpe] benum MS 222 beorgum Grein] burgum MS
flotan feldhusum; fyrd was on ofste.
Siðdan hie geteadon wiu þam teonhete
on þam forðherge fedan twelfe
mode rofra—mægen was onhrered;
wæs on anra gehwam ædelan cynnes
alesen under lindum leoda dugeðe
on folcgetæl fiftig cista;
æfde cista gehwilc cuðes werodes
garberendra guðfremmendra
tyn hund geteled tireadigra.
þæt wæs wiglic werod. Wace ne gretton
in þæt rincgetæl ræswan herges,
þa þe for geogude gyte ne mihton
under bordhroðdan breostnet wera
wið flanc feond folnum werigean,
ne him bealubenne gebiden ðæfdon
of er linde lærig licwunde spor
gypplegan gares; gamele ne moston
hare headorincas, hilde ðonæon,
gif him modheapum mægen swiðrædæ—
ac hie be wæstmun wigend curon,
hu in leodscipe læstan wolde
mod mid aran, eac þan mægenes cræft,
<þæt ge guð> garbeames feng.
Þa wæs handrofra here ætgæderæ
fus on forðwegas. Fana uppe rad,
beacna beorhtost. Bidon ealle þa gen
hwonne siðboda sæstreamum neah
leoht ofer lindum lyftedoras bræc.
Ahleop þa for hæleðum hildecalla,
bald bodhata bord up ahof,
heht þa folctogan fyrdre gestillan,
þenden modiges ðæfdom monige gehyrdon.

226 rofra [Bouterwek²] rofa MS
239 spor [Grein] swor MS
243 wigend; wigende [Mörken] wig MS
T. before garbeames feng ðæf gap in MS
248 fus on forðwegas
Kluge] fus forðwegas MS uppe rad T.; up gerad Sievers²] up rad MS
249 beacna Cosijn²] beama MS bidon [Grein] buton MS
252 P. 156
begins with AHleop, large cap. A
253 bodhata Bouterwek²] beo/
hata MS
Wolde reordigean rices hyrde
ofer hereciste halgan stefne.
Werodes wisa wurðmyndum spræc:
‘Ne beod ge þy forhtran þeah þe Faraon brohte
sweordwigendra side hergas,
eorla unrim! Him eallum wile
mihtig Drihten þurh mine hand
to dæge þissum dædlean gyfan,
þæt hie lifigende leng ne moton
ægnian mid yrmdum Israhela cyn.
Ne willað eow ondrædan deade fædan,
fæge ferhðolcan—fyrst is æt ende
lænes lifes. Eow is lar Godes
abroden of breostum. Ic con beteran ræd:
þæt ge gewurðien wuldres aldon,
and eow Liffreân lissa bidden,
sigora gesynto, þær ge síðien.
Þis is se ecea Abrahames God,
frumsceaftra frea, se ðas fyrd wered
modig and mægenrof mid miclan hand.’
Hof ða for hergum hlude stefne
lifigendra leod, þa he to leofum spræc:
‘Hwæt! ge nu eagem on lociað,
folca leofost, færwundra sum,
u ic sylfa sloh and þeos swiðre hand
grene tane garsecges deop.
Yð up færð, ofstum wyrceð
wæter wealfæsten! wegas syndon dryge,
haswe herestæta, holm gerymed,
ealde stãðolas þa ic ær ne gefrægn
ofer middangeard men geferan,
fage feldas þa forð heonon
in ecnesse yðe þeahton,
sælde sægrundas. Sund wind fornarn,
bæðweges blæst; brim wæs areafod, sand sæcir span. Ic wat sod gere þæt eow mihtig God milte gecyðde, eorlas ærglade! Ofest is selost þæt ge of leonda fæðme woðen, nu se agendfrea up ærde reade streamas in randgęeboð.
Syndon þa foreweallas fægre gestepte, wraetlicu wægfaru, oð wolcna hrof.' Æfter þam wordum werod eall aras, modigra mægen; mere stille bad. Hofon herecyste hwite linde, segnas on sande. Sæweall astah, uplang gestod wið Israelum andægne fyrst. Wæs se eorla gedriht anes modes...
faestum fæðnum freóðowaðe heold. Nalles hie gehyrwdon haliges lare, siðdan leofes leop læste near <læstan ongunnon leoda duguðe>, sweg siðröde and sanges bland. Þa þæt feorðe cyn fyrmest eode, wod on wægstream wigan on heape ofer grenne grund; Iudisc fæða an onette uncuð gelad for his meægwinum. Swa him mihtig God þæs dægweorcæs deop lean forgeald; siðdan him gesælde sigorworca hreð, þæt he ealdordom agan sceolde ofer cynericu, cneowmaga blæd. Hæfdon him to segne þa hie on sund stigon ofer bordhreoðan beacen æræd in þam garheape, gyldenne leon, drihtfolca mæst, deora cenost. Be þam herewisan hynðo ne woldon

be him lifigendum lange þolian,
þonne hie to guðe garwudu rærdon,  
ðecoda ænigre. Pracu wæs on ore,  
heard handplega, hægsteald modig,  
wæpna wæslhites, wigend unforht,  
bilswaðu blodig, beadumægnes ræs,  
grimhelma gebrid, þær Ludas for.  
Æfter þære fyrda flota modgade,  
Rubenes sunu; randas bærón  
sæwicingas ofer sealrne merec,  
manna menio; micel angetrum  
eode unforht. He his ealdordóm  
synnum aswefede, þæt he siðor for  
on leofes last. Him on leodsceare  
frumbearnnes riht freobraðor ðéah,  
ead and ædelo: he wæs gearu swa-þeah.  

<For> þær him æfter folca þryðum  
sunu Simeones—sweotum comon  
þridde þeodemægen; þuðas wundon  
ofer garfare—guðcyste onþrang  
deawigsceafan. Ðægwoma becwom  
ofer garsecege, Godes beacna sum,  
morgen meretorht. Mægen forð gewat.  
Þa þær folcmægen for æfter oðrum  
(isernhergum an wisode  
mægenþrymmum mæst—þy he mære weard)  
folc æfter folcum on forðwegas  
cynn æfter cynne; cuðe æghwilc  
mægburga riht, swa him Moises bead,  
eorla ædelo. Him wæs an fæder:  
leof leodfruma landriht ðéah  
frod on ferhðe, fremagum leof;  
cende cneowsibbe cenra mannå

326 [pracu Grein] þracu MS  327 modig T.] modige MS
329 blodig Sievers²] blodige MS  334 manna Sievers²] man MS
340 for þær him æfter T.; for þær æfter him Mürkens] þær æfter him MS,
no gap  344 deawigsceafan T.] deawigsceafum MS  345 garsecege
Graz] garseceges MS  346 meretorht Kluge] mære- MS  350 P. 160
ends on forðwegas folc æfter, P. 161 begins wolcnum folcum Thorpe]
wolcnum MS; order emend. T.
heahfædera sum, halige þeode,
Israhela cyn onriht Godes,
swa þæt orþancum calde reccad,
þa þæt mægburge mæst gefrunon
frumcyn feora, fæderæðelo gehwæs.
Niwe flodas Noe oferlað,
þrymfaþt þeoden, mid his þrim sunum,
þone deopestan drencefloda
para þe gewurde on woruldrice.
Hæfde him on hredre halige treowa;
for þon he gelædde ofer lagustreamas
mæðmhorda mæst, mine gefraege:
on feorhgebeorh foldan hæfde
eallum eordcynne ece lafe,
frumcneow gehwæs, fæder and moder
tuddorteondra geteled rime
mislecra ma þonne men cunnnon,
snottor seleoda. Eac þon sæda gehwilc
on bearm scipes beornas feredon
para þe under heofonum hæleð bryyttigad.
Swa þæt wise men wordum secgað
þæt from Noe niþoda ware
fæder Abrahames on folctale.
Paþt is se Abraham se him engla God
naman niwan asceop, eac þon neah and feor
halige heapas in gehylde behead,
werþeoda geweald. He on wreafe lifde.
Siddan he gelædde leofost feora
Haliges hæsum; heahlond stigon
sibgemagas on Seone beorh.
Ware hie þær fundon; wuldor gesawon,
halige heahtreowe, swa hæleð gefrunon.
þær eft se snottra sunu Davides,
wuldorfaþt cyning, witgan larum
getimbrede tempel Dryghtne,
alh haligne, eordcyninga
se wisesta on woruldrice,
hehst and haligost, hæledum gefrægost,
maest and mærost þara þe manna bearh,
ﬁra æfter foldan, folnum geworhte.
To þam medelstede magan gelædde
Abraham Isaac—adfyr onbran,
sus ferhðobana; no þy fægra wæs—
wolde þone lastweard lige gesyllan,
in bælbylyse beorna selost,
his swæsne sunu to sigetibre,
angan ofer eordan yrfelafe,
feores frofre. Da he swa forð gebad,
leodum to lare, langsumne hiht.
He þæt gecyðde, þa he þone eniht genam
fæste mid folsum, folcuð geteag
ealde lafe (ecg grymetode),
þæt he him lifdagas leofran ne wisse
þonne he hyrde heofoncyninge.
Se eorl up aræmde, wolde slean eaferan sinne
unweaxenne, ecgum reodon,
magan mid mece, gif hine Metod leta.
Ne wolde him beorht Fæder bearh æt niman,
halig tiber, ac mid handa befeng.
Þa him styran cwom stefn of heofonum,
wuldres hleðor, word æfter spræc.
‘Ne sleh þu, Abraham, þin agen bearh,
sunu mid sweorde! Soð is gecyðed,
nu þin cunnode Cyning alwihta,
þæt þu wið Waldende ware heolde,
fæste treowe, seo þe freoda sceal
in lifdagum lengest weordan
awa to aldre unoswicendo.

Hu þearf mannes sunu maran treowe?
Ne behwylfan mæg heofon and eordæ

392 alh Bouterwek] alhn MS 394 hehst] heahst MS 399 fus
Klaeber (1904)] fyrst MS 405 lare Bouterwek] lafe MS 411 se
eorl up aræmde order corr. T. 412 ecgum Thorpe] eagum MS
414 æt niman Sievers2] æt niman MS 418 P. 163 begins 421 wal-
dende T.] waldend MS 422 freoda T.; freode Graz] freoða MS
his wuldres word, widdre and siddre
þonne befæðman mæge foldan sceatas,
eorðan ymbhwyrtt and uprodor,
430 garsegges gin and þeos geomre lyft.
He æð swereoð, engla þeoden,
wyrdæ Waldend ond wereda God
söðfæst sigora, þurh his sylfes lif,
þæt þines cynnes and cneowmaga
randwiggendra rim ne cunnon
ylde ofer eordan ealle cræfte
to geseegenne söðum wordum,
ynmæ hwyłc þæs snottor in sefan weorde.
þæt he ana mæge ealle geriman
440 stanæs on eordan, steorran on heofonum,
sæbeorga sand, sealte yða;
ac hie gesittæ, be sæm tweonum
oð Egipta ingeþeode,
land Cananea, leode þine,
freobearn fæder, folca selost...’

* * *

Folc wæs afæred; flodegsa becwom
gastas geomre. Geofon deaðe hweop.
Wæræn beorhhlíðu blode bestemed;
holm heolfræ spaw, hream wæs on yðum,
wæter wæpna ful; wælmiast astah.
Wæræn Egypte eft oncyrde,
flugon forhtende; fær ongeton,
woldon herebleaðe hamas findan;
gylp weard gnomra. Him ongen genap
450 atol yða gewealc, ne ðær ænig becwom
herges to hame, ac behindan beleac
wyrd mid wæge. ðær ær wesgas lagon
mere modgode; mægen wæs adrenced.

427 widdre and siddre T.] widdra 7 siddra MS; id over incomplete
428 erasure, r still visible beside d
428 sceatas Dietrich] sceatas MS
431 he Thorpe] ne MS
436 ylde Grein] ylde MS 441 sand
Thorpe] sund MS
443 egipta] egipte MS; ingeþeode Grein]
incæðeode MS
446 P. 166 begins; P. 164 is blank; a leaf is then cut
out; P. 165 is blank
Streamas stodon. Storm up gewat
heah to heofonum, herewopa mæst;
laðe cyrmdon (lyft up geswearc)
fægum stefnum. Flod blod gewod.
Randbyrig wæron rofene; rodor swipode
meredeða mæst; modige swulton
cyningas on cordre. Cyre swiðrode
wæges æt ende. Wigbord scinon.
Heah ofer hæleðum holmweall astah,
merestream modig; mægen wæs on cwealme
fæste gefeterod, forðganges nep,
searwum asæled. Sand basenodon
witodre wyrd, hwonne wæðema stream,
sincalda sæ, sealtum yðum,
æflastum gewuna ece staðulas
nacud nydboda neosan come,
fah feðegast, se de feondum gencop.
Wæs se hæwene lyft heolfre geblanden;
brim berstende blodegasan hweop
sæmanna side, oð þæt sod Metod
þurh Moyses hand mod gerymde.
Wide wædde, wælfæðnum sweep;
flod famgode. Fæge crungon.
Lagu land gefeol. Lyft wæs onhrered.
Wicon weallfæsten; wægas burston,
multon meretorras. Þa se mihtiga sloh
mid halige hand, heofonrices Weard;
werge beornas, wランス þeode
ne mihton forhabban helpendra wæð,
merestreames mod; ac he manegum gesceod
gyllende gryre. Garsecg wedde:
up atecah, on sleap. Egesan stodon;
weollon wælhenna. Widertrod gefeol
heah of heofonum handweorc Godes

462 stefnum [Sedgefield] stefnum MS 466 wæges Grein] sæs MS
470 asæled [Junius and edd.] æ-MS basenodon T.; basenodon Dietrich
barenodon MS 471 wyrd [Dietrich] fyrdre MS 478 side T.]
sid MS 479 P. 167 begins with hand 486 werge beornas
Holthausen (G-K, 782) werbeamas MS 487 wða T.] pad MS
491 Widertrod; wîdertrod Sisam, MNL xxxii (1917), 48] wit rod MS
famigbosma; flod wearde sloh
unbleowan wæg alde mece,
þæt þy deãdrepe drihte swæfon,
synfullra sweet. Sawllum lunnon
fæste befarene flodblac here,
siðdan hie on bosum 〈genom〉 brim yrringa
modwæga mæst—mægen call gedreas—,
deape gedrencte dugod Egypta,
Faraon mid his folcum. He onfond hraðe,
siðdan 〈geofoon〉 gestah, Godes andsaca,
þæt wæs mihtigra meroflodes Weard,
wolde heorufæðmum hilde gesceadan
yrre and egesfull. Egyptum weard
þæs dægweorces deop lean gesceod,
for ðam þæs heriges ham eft ne com
ealles unrimes anig to lafe,
þætte sið heora secgan moste,
bodigean æfter burgum bealospella mæst,
hordwearda hryre hælða cwenum,
ac þa mægenþretas meredead geswealh,
〈spilde〉 spelbodan, se ðe spæd nahte;
ageat gylp wera. Hie wið God wunnon.
Panon Israelum ece rædas
on merehwearfe Moyses sægde,
heahþungen wer, halige spræce
doop ærende; dægweorc ne mād.
Swa gyt werðeode on gewritum findað
doma gehwilcne þara de him Drihten bebead
on þam siðfate, sóðum wordum.
Gif onlucan wile lifes weallhstod
beorht in breostum, banhuses weard,
ginfæstan god gastes cægum,
run bid gerecenod, rede forde ganged:
hafad wislicu word on faeme,
wile meagollice modum tacan,
bracht we gesne ne syn Godes peodscipes,
Metodes miltsa. He us ma onlyhod,
nu us boceras betteran secgad
lengran lifwynna. Pis is laine dream,
wommum awyrded, wrecsum alyfed,
carmra anbid: edellease
ypsum ystesle gihdum healde,
murnad on mode, manhus witon
faest under foldan, þeir bid fyr and wyrm,
open ece scaraf yfela gehwylces.
Swa nu regnpeofes rice daela,
yldo odde ærdead—eftwyrd cymed,
mægenprymma maest, ofer middangeard,
dæg dædum faþ; Drihten sylfa
on þam medelstede manegum demed,
þonne he sodfatra sawla laede,
eadige gastas, on uprodor,
þeir <bid> leocht and lif, eac þon lissa blæd;
dugoð on dreame Drihten herigeð,
weroda Wuldoorcyning, to widan feore.
Swa reordode ræde gemynedig
manna mildost mihtum swiðed
hluðan stefne. Here stille bad
witodes willan, wundor ongeton,
modiges muðhæl; he to manegum spræc.
'Micel is þeos menigeo; Mægenwisa trum,
fullæsta maest, se þas fare laede.
Hafad us on Cananea cyn gelyfed
burh and beagas, brade rice;
wile nu gelestan þæt He lange gehet
mid aðsware, enyla Drihten,
in fryndagum fæderencynne,
gif ge gehealdað halige lare,
þæt ge feonda gelwone ford ofergangað
gesiðtad sigerice be sam tweonum
beorselas beorna—bid eower blæd micel!
Æfter þam wordum werod wæs on salum,
sungon sigebyman—segnas stodon—
fägerne sweg. Folc wæs on lande;
hæfde wuldres beam werod gelæded,
halige heapas, on hild Godes.
Life gefegon, þa hie oðlæded hæfdon
feorh of feonda dome, þeah de hie hit frecne geneðdon,
weras under wætara hrofas—gesawon hie þær weallas
standan;
ealle him brimu blodige þuhton þurh þa heora
beadosearo wægon.
Hreðdon hildespelle, siddan hie þam holme wÝðforon;
hofon hereþreatas hlude stefne;
for þam dægweorce Drihten heredon.
weras wuldres sang, wif on <gunnon>
óðrum <wordum> . . .
folcsweota mæst, fyrdleot galan
aclum stefnum, callwuntra fela:
þa wæs eaðfynde Afrisc meowle
on geofoines staðe golde geweordod.
Handa hofon halswurðunge,
blðe waron, bote gesawon,
heddon herereafes—hæft wæs onsæled!
Öngunnon sælafe segnum dælan
on yðlafe, ealdæ madmas,
refa and randas; heom on riht sceodon
gold and godweb, Iosepes gestreon,
weræ wuldorgesteald—werigend lagon
on deaðstede, drihtfolca mæst.

566 on om. T.] on fægerne MS 569 gefegon Dietrich| gefeon MS
573 holme suppl. T.; herge suppl. Grein 575 dægweorce T.] dæd-
MS 576 P. 171 begins with wif 576–8 rearr. T., with gunnon
and wordum supplied 587 heom Grein| heo MS . sceodon Thorpe)
seeo MS 590 mæst Junius and edd.] mæ followed by erasure MS
NOTE TO TRANSLATION

Although the author’s translation was progressively altered and emended, it does not everywhere accord with changes in the text and interpretations given in the commentary. Translation from the commentary has therefore been incorporated for the following lines: 202-4, 233, 246, 266, 308-8+, 491-4, 550-1, 576-9.
TRANSLATION

Lo! We have heard how near and far over middle-earth Moses declared his ordinances to men, uttering in words wondrous laws to the races of mankind—to all the blessed healing of their life’s care in heaven on high after the perilous journey, to all the living enduring counsel: let him hearken who will!

This man did the Lord of Hosts, true King, by his own might honour in the wilderness, and to him did the Eternal and Omnipotent grant power over many miracles. He was dear unto God, prince of his people, a leader of the host, sage and wise of heart, valiant captain of his folk. Pharaoh’s race, the enemies of God, he constrained with the plagues of his rod. There the Lord of Victories gave into the hands of that chieftain high-hearted the lives of his kinsmen, and habitation in the land of their fathers for the sons of Abraham. Glorious was that gift: the Lord in His graciousness to him vouchsafed victory in arms against the terror of their foes; in that warfare he overcame many men of high lineage and the inheritance of their enemies.

It was in that first time when the God of Hosts spoke in words to him that He declared to Moses many marvellous truths, telling how He in His kingly wisdom had fashioned this world and in power and glory established the orb of Earth and the high Heaven; and revealing His own name, which the children of Men ere that had known not, not even the wise generation of the fathers, though great was their knowledge. Thereafter He strengthened with righteous powers the captain of the host, Pharaoh’s enemy, and exalted him upon the march from Egypt. At that time still newly was the greatest of proud peoples smitten mortally with the plagues of old. At the fall of their princes lamentation was renewed, mirth was hushed in the halls bereft of treasure. The fell destroyer had at midnight with cruel stroke laid low every
first-born child and crushed the lords of cities: far and wide
the Slayer ranged grievously afflicting the people. The land
was dark with corpses of the dead. Forth marched the host!—
wailing was on every side, little the merriment of men; palsied
were the hands of the makers of mirth. It was allowed that
people to enter upon their begrudged journey—a nation on
the march. The Fiend was robbed. The fanes toppled.
Lamentation entered there. The idols of the devil were
thrown down. Renowned throughout the world was the day
when that multitude set out; albeit the folk of Egypt, accursed
of old, had wrought thus treacherously for many a year, in
that they purposed to deny for ever, had God permitted them,
to Moses' kin, to their unceasing longing, that desiréd march.
Eager was the army to go; high the heart of him who led
their kindred, the chieftain young and bold. With that folk he
marched past many a fastness, many a land and habitation
of unfriendly men, felling down narrow paths and ways
unsearched, until they bore their arms against the warlike
people on the marches. Their lands were canopied with a
cloudy veil, border-dwellings builded upon the moorward
slopes; through which Moses led the army of men most
valiant. Then when two nights were past since they had
escaped their foes he bade the men triumphant to set their
camp in clamorous company, with their invading host and
power most mighty, about Etham's cities upon the border-
lands. Perforce they had adventured into the northern
regions, knowing that to their southward lay the Sundwellers'
land, hill-slopes scorched and folk grown swart under the hot
furnace of the skies. There had the Holy God shielded the
people from the deadly flame, and over the blazing firmament
had spread a weft divine across the torrid sky: a windborne
cloud with outstretched arms had ever divided earth and
heaven above, going before the companies of men. Glowing
bright with heat on high it absorbed the fiery flames. Men
gazed upon it, a host most jubilant. Their protecting shield by
day, it passed across the skies. God in His wisdom had drawn
a sail as a tent over the paths of the sun, in such wise that the
ropes of the mast men perceived not, and the sailyards none
could see who dwell on earth, nor with all their skill know how
that great pavilion was made fast.
Since He had exalted in glory the people loyal to their Lord, now was made the third encampment for the comfort of the folk; all that host there saw how the holy sails towered up a shining wonder in the air; the people, the chosen men of Israel, perceived that there was come the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, to measure out their camp. (108–19) Each evening another marvel strange, after the sun had sunk to rest, He commanded to shine with fire above the hosts, a burning pillar. Gleaming above the bowmen there stood forth shining radiances. Flashed the serried shields. The shadows fainted. Nigh to that light their hiding-places might not conceal the deep glooms of night below. The torch of Heaven blazed. A new watchman of the night must of duty encamp above their companies, lest the terror of the waste stalking grey over the moors with tempests from the sea shoul in its sudden clutches rob them of their lives. (120–4) Fiery locks that vanguard bore and gleaming rays of light; with hot fire and blazing terror he made threat against that embattled array that he would in the wilderness burn to nought their host, unless with hearts of courage they heartened to the words of Moses. (93–107) Before them went fire and a cloud n the bright firmament, two pillars that each in turn did equally divide the high service of the Holy Spirit, waiting upon the journey of those bold-hearted men by day and by night. Then, have I heard, that in the morning men of valiant heart lifted up the loud voices of the trumpets of war, in clangour glorious. All the host arose, a mighty array of gallant men, as Moses, renowned captain, bade them, the people of the Lord. The marshalled host pressing ever on saw their guide to salvation measuring onward its path across the sky. As a sail it governed their journey; the seamen followed, treading the ways unto the ocean.

Blissful was that people; loud the clamour of the army. Their sign in heaven rose. (125) The bright host shone, their shields flashed. There those warriors, grasping their targets, saw a path made straight, and a banner above their companies going eagerly forward on the road, until the fastness of the sea at the land's end forbade the passage of their mighty host. There their ordered camp arose, and the weary refreshed themselves—gallant servitors approached them with vic-
tuals—they repaired their strength. There about the slopes of the shore, when the trumpet sounded, those seafarers spread their pavilions upon the field. Then was the fourth camp, the resting of warriors beside their shields, upon the Red Sea's shore. There upon their host dread tidings fell, the pursuit of the dwellers in the land. Terrors were upon them, the fear of those cruel hosts. The exile awaited the fell pursuer, the Egyptian that had long before decreed to him bondage far from the land of his fathers, now doomed to bitter punishments for those wrongs—their covenant they had not heeded, though their elder king had earlier sworn... (lacuna)

Then Pharaoh became the heir of the people of his land, in consequence of the gifts of exchange men had made, so that he increased greatly. All this they forgot. Now the Egyptian race grew wroth concerning the rebellion, when they (the Israelites) had wrought death upon their dear kinsmen; they devised a cruel return, they ate their words of promise. The rage of war surged about their hearts, the mighty wrath of men. With troth untrue they were minded treacherously to repay the gift of life, so that the people of Moses should in blood expiate the work of that day, had the mighty God granted them success upon their journey of destruction.

Now were the hearts of men without hope, when they saw from the southward ways the army of Pharaoh marching on, their crests like a forest moving, their cavalry shining, their banners towering, marching on over the borders of the realm. They arrayed the ranks of their spears; war was abroad; the serried shields were gleaming, the trumpets sang. On the sea chill were the waves. The carrion-birds screamed, greedy in battle—the dewy-feathered (eagle) above the doomed bodies of the host, and the dark picker of the slain. The wolves sang their dread evensong in expectation of their meat; beasts unpitying grown bold at the dying of day they waited upon the heels of those hated foes for the slaughter of many men. The outposts cried aloud in the midmost hours of night. The doomed exile turned to flee. The people of Israel was in despair. At whiles forth from the host proud knights rode measuring the miles of the road with their steeds' strong limbs; there before his standard rode their victorious king, a prince of men with a marching company, king and lord
of men of battle; his vizored helm and beaver he fastened
on—how the banners gleamed!—bethinking him of war, his
warrior's coat of mail he shook; the chosen companies of his
army he bade heedfully hold fast their ordered ranks. With
eyes of hatred there the friends beheld the coming of the men
of Egypt. About Pharaoh fearless warriors bore their gear,
like grey and deadly wolves they drew nigh to battle, thirsting
for the press of war, loyal unto their king. Two thousands had
he chosen of the princes of his chivalry peerless in renown—
kings were they and kinsmen of the throne, according to the
ancient laws of that realm, nobles of high lineage. Wherefore
had each one of these led out to war every warrior of male race
such as in that space he might furnish forth; there were all the
men of his household gathered together in the company of the
king. Oft did the familiar sound of the horn amid the host give
signal to what point the soldiers and the embattled ranks of
men should march in their array. Thus led they on their
mighty host of swarthy men, foeman after foeman, the multi-
tude of that people's power; in thousands upon thousands
they marched thither bent on war. Their purpose it was with
that assembled might at the first light of day to destroy with
swords the race of Israel in vengeance for their brethren.
Wherefore in the camp was a cry upraised, a grim song at
eve—lo! terrors threatened them; deadly toils cut off escape;
when that great rumour came, to and fro flew tidings dire; in
high mood was the foe, the host was pale with fear of their
onset—until the mighty angel that guarded the multitude
thrust aside the Egyptians in their pride, so that no longer
could the opposed foes observe each other; their ways were
sundered. Thus respite one night long the fugitive had, albeit
on every side enemies hung threatening him, or power of
Egypt or the streaming sea. Room to turn they had no more,
no hope was left them of their rightful fatherland; about the
slopes of the shore they sat in raiment dark, awaiting woe.
Unsleeping there all that concourse of one race awaited the
onset of the mightier power, until at the grey hour of dawn
Moses bade men with brazen trumpets summon the people,
call up the warriors to arise and put on their mail, turn their
minds to valour, bearing their bright harness; bade with
signals assemble the companies yet nigher the shore. The
chieftains bold heeded the loud call to war, and host was stirred. The seafarers over the slopes, obeying the trumpet, struck their pavilions upon the field; their army was in haste. Then they numbered in the van, their defence against the evil that pursued, twelve battalions of dauntless hearts—their might was set in motion—in each of these were chosen under arms of the power of the people fifty companies of the men of proven valour of that noble race; each company of that renowned host contained ten numbered hundreds of men with spears and trained to war, warriors of fame. A warlike host was that. There the captains of the army summoned no weakling into the fighting force, such as for their youth not yet might amid the serried shields with hands defend the mail upon their manly breasts against the hostile foe, nor yet had suffered the pain of wound that passed the shield’s defence or known body’s hurt, the scar of the gallant play of spears; and the old, too, men gone grey in war, might not in that battle avail, if their strength among the valiant companies had waned. Nay, rather the warriors they chose by body’s power, so that in the ranks of Israel they should with honour fulfil the valour of their hearts, and their mighty strength be addressed to grasping the spear in war. Then was all the army of those men unflinching from the strokes of battle gathered together eager for the advance. The banner rode on high, brightest of emblems. Yet still all men waited until the herald of their journey shining above their shields nigh to the flowing of the sea passed into the courts of the sky. Thereupon there leapt forth before the hosts a crier, a herald bold of voice, and upraised his shield, commanding the captains to still the ranks while the speech of their proud prince should be heard by many. The ruler of their might purposed to speak words with voice inspired amid the assembled companies. Nobly he spoke, the leader of that host: ‘Be ye not by this made more afraid, though Pharaoh have brought against you armies vast, a countless multitude of men! To all of these will the mighty Lord this day by my hand deliver the gerdon of their deeds, that no longer may they live to possess in unhappy thraldom the race of Israel. Ye will not fear battalions already dead and bodies doomed to die—the space is at an end of their swift-passing life. The word of God is taken from your hearts.
Counsel better do I know: that ye should honour the Prince of Glory and pray to the Lord of Life for His comfort, salvation, and victory, as ye take your road. Lo! it is the everlasting God of Abraham, the Master of Creation, that defendeth this host with mighty hand; in Him is courage, power, and valour. Then before the hosts the captain of the living people upraised his voice aloud, as he spake unto the dear folk. 'Behold! people most dear, now with your eyes you look upon a wondrous marvel, how I and this my right hand have smitten the deep of ocean with a green wand. The wave mounts on high, in haste the water builds a bulwark like a wall! The ways are grown dry, grey are the marching roads, the towering waters are laid open, and their old foundations which never have I heard tell that men before upon this earth did overpass, wide spaces of many hues that from now to the beginning of things the waves through endless ages hid, the imprisoned bottoms of the sea. The wind blowing over the ocean-ways has taken away the floods, the deeps have been stripped, the sea turned back has spurned the sand. Yea, verily, I know that the mighty God has revealed His mercy unto you, men most joyful! In haste it were best that ye should get you from the clutches of your foes, now that our Lord and Master hath lifted on high the red sea-streams as a protection upon either side. The outer walls are builded high and fair even unto the roof of the clouds, a marvellous passage of the waves.'

Upon these words all the host arose, a mighty concourse of valiant men. Still stood the sea. There the companies uplifted their white shields and their ensigns upon the sands. The wall of the sea mounted high, and sheer up it stood a whole day's space beside the men of Israel. Of one mind was that array of men... With steadfast arms outstretched it kept its promise of protection. In no wise did they despise the bidding of their holy leader; when close behind their beloved prince brave men began to act upon his words, all clamour ceased and the confusion of voices. Then was the fourth tribe the first to advance; they strode into the flowing waves, ranks of warriors over the green sea-bottom; the host of Judah alone at the head hastened over the unfamiliar paths before his kinsmen. Wherefore did God vouchsafe to him a high reward for his
deeds that day; thereafter there came to him the glory of victorious deeds, that of right he should possess the prince-
dom over many kingdoms and pride of place among his kin.

As an ensign before them, when they strode into the sea, above their serried shields they had upraised their emblem amid the thronging spears, a golden lion—mightiest of marshalled folk and beast most fearless; by which token their captains, when they had upraised their shafted spears for battle, while life lasted not long would suffer shame from the hands of any among the peoples. Fierce valour was in their van, grim the strokes of their hands, each young man dauntless in the deadly field of arms, each warrior without fear, bloody the swath their long swords made, mighty the onset of their battle, loud the shivering of vizor and helms, where Judah came. Behind the host the heart of the seafarer, Reuben’s son, was filled with valour; their shields those rovers bore over the salt seaward lands, a multitude of men, a mighty and ordered host they marched as one, fearing nought. His place pre-eminent had Reuben destroyed by sin, so that he marched later, following his brother’s feet. His firstborn right, birth and herittance, had his fair brother taken in his stead in the ordering of the people; and yet bold too was he. Behind him marched in mighty troops the son of Simeon, the third division on that day—in companies they came, their standards moved above the passing of the spears—pressing ever on with wartried companies whose shafts the morning touched with dew. The rumour of day came there over the deeps, God’s beacon-fire, morning bright upon the sea. Forth went the power of Israel. There each mighty division of the people followed the other—to those iron-clad armies one among them greatest in glorious power showed the path, and grew renowned thereby—one people after another upon their forward way, tribe on tribe. Each knew the rights his lineage bestowed, even as Moses had proclaimed, the birthrights of all those noble men. One forefather had they all: dear prince of his people, wise of heart he had received land and privileges (of God), beloved among his kin; offspring had he begotten that patriarch of old, a holy race of valiant men, the people of Israel the lawful children of God, even as with wisdom do men of old relate who deepest studied the history of the
tribes and the generations of men, and the ancestry of each . . .

The new-come floods Noah did traverse, a glorious prince, with his three sons, the most profound of all overwhelming floods that should ever come to pass within the realm of earth. In his heart he kept the holy covenant with God; wherefore he steered over streams of the sea the greatest of hoarded treasures of which I have heard men tell; for the preservation of the life of earth he bore with him an everlasting legacy for all the races of the world, the first ancestor of each, the father and the mother of all such as bring forth young, a host of various kind in number due, greater than men do know the tale of; a wise man of the sea was he. Yea more, each kind of seed did men bring into the bosom of the ship that men upon earth make use of. This then do wise men relate, that from Noe the father of Abraham was the ninth in the count of generations. That is the Abra(ha)m for whom the God of Angels appointed a new name, and moreover entrusted to his protection the hosts of God's people far and near and to him gave the command over the tribes of men. In exile he lived. Thereafter at the command of the Holy One he led forth the dearest of living things; the high places they ascended, father and son together, and the mount of Sion. There did a covenant await them— they perceived the glory of God, His high and holy promises, as men have heard.

In that same place, in later days did the wise son of David, king most glorious, at the bidding of the seer build a temple unto God; a holy flame did he, wisest of all earthly kings in the world's realms, set there, loftiest, holiest, most famed among men, mightiest, most glorious of all things that the children of men or the folk of earth have built with hands.

To that appointed place did he lead his kinsman, Abraham Isaac his son—the pyre blazed up, eager destroyer of life; no whit the nearer to death was (the victim)—purposing to deliver his heir unto the flame and to give his most beloved child unto the blazing pile, offering his sweet son as a peerless sacrifice, who was his only treasure and possession upon earth, the comfort of his days. Therefore he after lived to know enduring joy, as an example unto men. This did he show forth plainly, when he, renowned among all folk, grasped the boy grimly with his hands, and drew forth the ancient sword of his
fathers—the sharp edge cried for blood—that he counted not his very life dearer than obedience to the King of Heaven. Up rose he, purposing to slay his own child, not yet come to manhood, to spill his kinsman’s blood with the sharp sword’s blade, had God so suffered him.

But the glorious Father would not receive from him his child, a holy sacrifice, but seized him by the hand. Thereupon a voice came from Heaven bidding him stay, a sound divine, and thereafter spake these words: ‘Slay not, Abraham, thine own child and son with the sword! The truth is revealed, now that the Lord of all Things hath made trial of thee, that thou wouldst keep with the Almighty faith and steadfast troth—which shall be through thy life’s days the longest-lasting of comfort, for ever unfailing. What need hast any son of man of greater covenant? Neither Heaven nor Earth can contain within their spheres the glory of His words which are spread further and wider than the regions of the earth extend, the circle of the world, and the heavens on high, the gulf of Ocean, and this weeping air. An oath he saith, King of Angels, Lord of all that cometh to pass, God of Hosts; unfailing in victory, by His own life and being, that men on earth for all their skill shall not be able to tell in true words the number of thy kin and of thy posterity of warriors, unless some man shall become thus wise in heart that he alone may count all the stones on earth, the stars in heaven, the sands on the sea’s piled beaches, and the salt waves—nay, they shall dwell in the land of Canaan between the two seas, as far as the peoples that inhabit Egypt, thine own folk, the free children of one father, most blessed of peoples.

(lacuna)

The host was filled with fear; the terror of waters fell upon souls accursed. The sea loudly threatened death; the rocky cliffs were drenched with blood; the deep foamed with gore; cries were amid the waves; the water was filled with weapons; a deadly mist arose. Back were the Egyptians thrown; they fled in fear. The sudden peril they perceived, and faint in war they wished to seek their homes—less joyous was their boast. Against them lowered dark the awful surging of the seas, and there came never one of that army home, but behind fate with
waters shut them in. There where paths before had lain the ocean raged, the mighty host was drowned. The flowing seas were reared. A roaring uprose high unto the heavens, the greatest of battle-cries. The hated people wailed with voices doomed—dark grew the air above; the flood was driven with blood. Rent were the ramparts; the sky lashed down the direst of drowning deaths. They perished in their pride, kings in company. Their will was frustrate at the very waters' end. There gleamed the shields of war. High above the warriors lowered the wall of the deep, the ocean flowing in wrath; the mighty host was in destruction fettered fast, failing of its landing, snared and trapped.

The sands had awaited the hour of fate decreed when the flowing torrents, sea everlasting-cold, that was tamed to turn aside, should with salt waves come back to see its eternal foundations, inhuman threaten of woe, a moving spirit dire that overwhelmed those foes. The blue air was blent with gore. The bursting waters threatened the passage of those men amid the sea, until the true God by Moses' hand gave room unto its wrath. Wide then it ranged, sweeping with deadly arms outflung. Foaming was the flood. Doomed men went down. Sea fell back upon the ground. The sky was shaken. The embattled walls gave way; the billows burst; the towers of the sea crumbled.

When the Mighty One with holy hand, Guardian of Heaven's realm, smote the men accursed, the peoples proud might not restrain the onrush of those allies, the fury of the streams of the sea; nay, many it destroyed, shrieking, horrible. Mad was the deep. Up it climbed, on them it slithered down. Terrors menaced them. Deadly wounds were flowing. Down from heaven upon the retreat fell the high work of the hand of God; with front of foam the flood struck their guard, smote them shelterless as with a sword, so that with that death-blow the regiments died, the hosts of the sinful. They lost their lives inescapably hemmed-in, the gleaming army in the midst of the sea, when into its bosom in wrath the water took them, greatest of angry waves—all the mighty host perished—and drowned in death the flower of the Egyptians, Pharaoh with his folk. Swiftly did God's adversary find, when ocean mounted o'er him, that mightier was the Lord of the floods
of the sea, that He purposed, terrible in His ire, with fell embrace to set an end to war. Unto the Egyptians for the deeds of that day was decreed a payment dread, for of that army innumerable home came never one surviving man who might recount their hap, nor tell from town to town those greatest of tidings dire, the fall of the lords of wealth, unto the queens of men. Nay, those mighty regiments death swallowed in the sea, destroyed the bearer of tidings who had not the fortune (to escape), and poured to waste the vaunts of men. They had warred with God!

Thereupon eternal counsels upon the shores of the sea to Israel Moses the noble spake, with holy speech, their high errand telling. The deeds of that day he did not in silence keep. Even so shall the peoples of men still in scriptures find each solemn word that God announced to him upon the journey with words of truth. If the interpreter of lifegiving knowledge bright-burning in the breast, the ruler of the body's house, will with spiritual keys unlock the lavish good there stored, then the secrets (of the writing) will be explained, forth shall counsel come. Words of wisdom it embraceth, and earnestly will teach our hearts, that we be not destitute of divine instruction and of the mercies of God; Who to us vouchsafeth yet more, now that learned men tell us of a better and a more lasting life of joy. A fading mirth is this, and cursed with evils, permitted to wanderers, a waiting time of unhappy men. Exiles from home, in mourning they possess this hall of passing guests, lamenting in their hearts; they know the house of torment established under earth, where be fire and snake, an open everlasting tomb of all evil things. Thus now the arch-thieves, old age or untimely death, divide the realm; but a destined hour shall after come, and the greatest power and glory above the earth, a day of wrath upon men's deeds. The Lord himself in that place of meeting shall judge many a man. Then shall He lead the souls of the just, the spirits blest, into the heavens above, where shall be light and life, yea, abounding joys; His court in bliss shall praise the Lord, the glorious King of Hosts for ever.

Thus spake he with loud voice mindful of wise words, man most gracious, with power strengthened. The host silent and still waited on the destined purpose; they observed the
marvellous event, and noted the (hope of) salvation from their valiant leader’s mouth. To many there he spake, ‘Great is this multitude; trusty the Leader of the host, a succour most mighty He that this march doth guide! He hath vouchsafed to us in the land of Canaan town, and gold, and kingdom broad. Now He will accomplish that which He long ago did promise with sworn oath, He, the Lord of Angels, in days of yore unto our fathers’ race, if ye will but keep His holy bidding, that ye shall go ever forth in triumph over every foe, shall possess in victory the halls of men’s revelry between the two seas. Great shall your fortune be!’

After these words the host rejoiced; the victorious trumpets sang a music fair; the banners were upraised. The folk was come to land. The pillar of glory had led the host and holy companies into God’s protection. In their salvation they rejoiced, since they had led forth their lives from the dominion of their foes, though dangerously had they hazarded them under the waters’ caves. There had they seen as it were walls upstanding, blood-red had seemed to them the seas through which they bore their battle-harness. With tale of war-triumph they celebrated, for they had escaped (out of the deep). The armed companies uplifted voices loud; for that day’s deeds the Lord they praised. The men began to sing a song of glory, and on their part the women too . . ., greatest of folk arrayed in troops; a warlike hymn with voices awed, many a marvel great. Then was Hebrew maid plain to see upon the ocean’s shore adorned with gold. In hand they lifted (many a) necklace. Glad they were; their salvation they beheld. They took possession of the spoils of war. He that was captive was set free!

Then the leavings of the sea upon the waves’ end they did apportion to the banded companies, ancient treasures, shields and armour. Rightly to their lot fell gold and precious stuff, the treasure that was Joseph’s, the glorious possessions of men. Their wearers in that place of death lay low; greatest of hosts arrayed . . .
COMMENTARY

Introduction

The poem to which we give the title Exodus has long deservedly been esteemed as a spirited piece of writing, in which a greater harmony between the ancient English style and the biblical subject-matter has been achieved than is usual. This is not due alone to the greater suitability of the warlike matter to the heroic and traditional style, for the poet (grievously as our preserved version misrepresents him) has shown a narrative skill in the use of his material, and (still more important) a conception of his material which transcends a mere tale of victory. It is at once an historical poem about events of extreme importance, an account of the preservation of the chosen people and the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham; and it is an allegory of the soul, or of the Church of militant souls, marching under the hand of God, pursued by the powers of darkness, until it attains to the promised land of Heaven.

The poem is preserved in one manuscript only, in a dislocated and mutilated form, serving as an item in a sort of album or collection of biblical and religious verse; collected it would seem only at a time when good copies were no longer available. MS Junius 11 once belonged to the celebrated Archbishop Ussher, and it was used by William Somner in the compilation of his Anglo-Saxon dictionary; Ussher afterwards gave it to the scholar Franciscus Junius. Junius ultimately presented it to the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

The hand of part I of the MS, to which Exodus belongs, is dated x/xi, and the whole of this part was written by one man. The intention, at least while he was at work, was to make an 'edition-de-luxe'. This first part is illustrated with drawings, occupying much costly space, or has spaces left for drawings never completed. It is written with care—as far as calligraphy goes: it abounds in omissions, and in blunders over common words, many of which can hardly be excused even on the plea that they were already present in the copy.

Part I is offered to us as one sequence: Genesis, Exodus, Daniel. It is marked out in sections numbered i–lv. Only twenty-eight of these numbers are actually entered, and five more would have fallen on leaves now missing; but all section-openings now present are marked by ornamental initials or large capitals, or (at Exodus 63, 107, and 142) by spaces left for large capitals. These section-divisions derive from the scribe, not the poets; for in Exodus one
of them comes within an unbroken narrative passage (63), another in the middle of a sentence (107). The sequence is clearly composite, a collection of fragments, or an arrangement of material originally distinct in authorship and treatment. This composite character is best illustrated by Genesis, with its famous interpolation (in a different style and metre) on the fall of Satan and the temptation of man (Gen 2:35-851). The state of Genesis should put us on our guard when we come to Exodus. We cannot expect a poem originally composed for such a series; nor yet a poem as its author made it, considering the passage of time and the process of adapting to a collection. Here the critic has a larger latitude than usual. The Beowulf manuscript (Cotton Vitellius A. xvi) is as free from these complexities as it is from such costly elaboration. If the text of Beowulf is full of the minor accidental errors, it is as a whole a remarkable record, whose general fidelity, even when its scribes clearly were at sea, bears close examination. Here the emender must proceed with caution. But the scribe of MS Junius 11 part I was a different person. If he frequently preserves (in a fair hand) the unintelligible, he was quite capable of doctoring. He is not to be trusted.

It may reasonably be supposed that the author of Exodus belonged to the active time of Old English verse, not to the period of antiquarian reverence. Cædmon's name long held the field; and it remains incontestable that Bede's description of what Cædmon sang is as good a description of the contents of MS Junius 11 as one could wish for—except that it covers far more ground. But Cædmon was illiterate, and in Genesis the sacred text is followed closely, even servilely. None of this work can directly represent the moving poetry of the inspired peasant, which so deeply stirred his generation. Yet some of it evidently originated far back, not far from Cædmon's day, preserving the school or fashion of Cædmonian composition, and something of its spirit.

When we seek the relation of Exodus to other surviving Old English verse, no certain conclusions are possible. Similarities between Exodus and Beowulf have been explained by the author's use of Beowulf. But the reverse may be assumed, and has been (e.g. Klaeber, Beowulf (1928), p. cxiv; more doubtfully in the edition of 1936, p. cxli). The truth is, of course, that these similarities prove neither. Where they are not due simply to the common language and idiom in which two compared texts are written, their import is mistaken by those who conceive of authorship in ancient England as the same thing as it is today. There was a traditional style, vocabulary, and phraseology, much less modified by the individual: a fund of expressions for a multitude of things and situations, that
were not felt any the worse for being traditional. Upon this fund, not only of words but of phrases, authors who had never seen, or rather never heard one another’s work might draw in common and draw alike. They would not hesitate to do so—to breathe the common air of fine speech and solemn utterance was no more plagiarism than to use the formulae of everyday courtesy.

_Andreas_ is the most favourable example in the field of Old English verse for the investigation of parallels: because certain passages found in _Beowulf_, in their natural atmosphere and context, occur also in _Andreas_, where they have an air (greater or less) of being dragged in. But it would have to be shown that the imitated words would have been natural only in _Beowulf_, and not in any other heroic poems that the author of _Andreas_ could have known. This stricture applies _a fortiori_ to any supposed relationship between _Exodus_ and _Beowulf_. The most striking parallels are:

*Exod 58 enge anpadas uncud gelad; so Beow 1408.*
*Exod 200 for þon weas in wicum wop up ahafen / atol æfenleod; Beow 128–9 þa wæs æfter wiste wop up ahafen / micel morgensweog.*
*Exod 214 eal seo sibgedriht somod ætgeadere; Beow 387 seem sibbegedriht samod ætgeadere, 729 swefan.—*
*Exod 475 nacud nydboda; Beow 2273 nacod niδdraça (see commentary ad loc.).*

The first and last of these are perhaps of the sort that are in _Beowulf_ natural, in _Exodus_ forced. But these parallels show no more than that the heroic style preceded religious verse, which was an adaptation of a manner and a language devised originally rather for poems like _Beowulf_ than for poems like those of MS Junius 11.

We have then in _Exodus_ an originally independent poem, preserved now only in one manuscript, where it appears as part of an Old Testament series. Like _Genesis_, it opens with an ornamental initial followed by a whole line in majuscule. No other sectional divisions are treated in this way.

On the major questions of form, arrangement, and length we have little to go upon. When confronted with internal difficulties, we can only guess whether the original poem has been curtailed, adapted, accidentally dislocated, interpolated and expanded deliberately, or patched with alien material where chance damage left a gap. Something more definite than (i) inferiority, alleged or demonstrated, of a passage in the main mass of a poem; or (ii) supposed differences of style or vocabulary; or (iii) differences of metrical usage or metrical skill must be shown, before we begin to believe in interpolation. It must be remembered that poets seldom keep to one level; that passages where inspiration leaves them are apt to be bad from all
points of view at once; that the theme itself may be responsible for their boredom in some places and their failure.

It cannot be seriously doubted that *Exodus* is for some reason disjointed and incomplete. The poem ends in the middle of a word, although we need not suppose that much is lost: with the safe passage of the Israelites, the overthrow of the foes and the triumph of the faithful on the further shore, the allegorical conception already suggested was complete. Nor can it be doubted that some disarrangement has taken place between *Exodus* 86–108, though precisely what has happened may be debated. Other difficulties in the text are due rather to accidents that have happened to the manuscript itself since it was written.

*Treatment of the manuscript*

It is futile to preserve forms which are supposed to have linguistic (dialect or period) significance: because the object of the edition is not linguistic, and we are concerned with the *identity* of the word only; no linguistic investigator should use any edited text for gathering statistics; while most of these forms preserved by editors are paleographical in origin, or vitiated as linguistic evidence by suspicion of such an origin. Nearly all of the 'dialectal' forms preserved, for instance, in Klaeber's *Beowulf* text, and classified and commented upon in his introduction, break down entirely under examination. The remainder can safely be relegated to the apparatus.

Forms such as these should not be admitted to the text:

1 habad (hagiography); werode *corr.* -a; 28 yldo *corr.* -a; 40 drymsyde *corr.* drysmode (*note*); 56 fastena *corr.* -enna; 108 æfena *corr.* -enna; 463 scañnum *corr.* stefnum; 509 heoro *corr.* heora; 524 ægön *corr.* -um.

2–7. Interpretation of these lines depends on recognition of the construction. The key is the idiomatic use of infinitive without expressed subject, *segan* depending on *gefrigen habbad*; 4–6 gives a parenthetic description of *domas* and *wordrìht*, the objects of *seogan*. The idea expressed is that the Commandments are the road to Heaven for those who keep them (as the blessed have done) and still the guide for those in the world. Translate: 'We throughout the world have learnt (from Scripture) how the ordinances of Moses were declared unto men, his wondrous laws uttered in words to the world of men—to all the blessed a betterment of life after their journey of torment, to all the living enduring counsel.' In *bealusid* we have the key to the poem: it is not only the troublous passage through life, but the journey of the Israelites to the Promised Land, a symbol of that weary passage.

3. There are a number of passages in OE verse where *wæelic* appears to have a sense similar to, or identical with *wæetlic* 'wonderful, rare,
marvellous.' Such uses depend almost indubitably on error; confusion of the similar letters c and t, or interchange between words of the same outline. It remains remarkable nonetheless that all occurrences of *wraelic in verse (15 x., of which 11 are in PP's), except Gen 37, have the sense of *wraelo. For this reason, most editors keep *wraelico and translate *wraelico.

14. *frem*: this cannot be 'a variant form of from' (Krapp). It could be a contaminating error, by association with *freo* and the rarer adjective *freme*; or a separate word, for which little evidence exists. The form occurs also in Gen 2973, *frem on fullum*, and twice in the translation of Bede (ed. J. Schipper, *Bibliotheck der Angelsächsischen Prosa* iv (1899)): *fremlicies Ca.*, *frem- B. (I. iii, Schipper, p. 15); *frem O.*, *fram Ca.*, B. (IV. ii, Schipper, p. 348). But a stem *frew-* is hard to trace, although the infixed nasal could be explained.

15. A full stop is required at *band*; 12–15 describes Moses (most renowned for the plagues with which he smote the Egyptians); *heer* refers back to *on westenne* (not to the plagues incidentally mentioned), where God made his promise to bring the Israelites to Canaan. The plagues are naturally mentioned, however, because on this occasion of God's first speech with Moses, he foretells that this will be necessary to obtain the release of the Israelites.

17. *magereswan*: the MS *-raesum* is, like *andsaca* 15, an error in weak-noun inflexion. The assimilation of endings is a frequent cause of error in inflected languages, and abundantly evidenced in OE. There is here an additional source of error in *sunum*, which would suggest dative plural to the inattentive, combined with the form *modgum*, ambiguous in number.

22. *foleriht*: occurs also in Beow 2608, where it seems to indicate legal share of the common land, inherited estate. Here it may mean 'inherited lands, national possessions (in land)'. The passage is based on Exod. iii. 17.

28. *yldo*: here and in 437 we require gen. pl. *ylde* of the poetic *ylde* 'mortal men'. In both places it is due to sheer error, either a careless association with OE *ylde* 'age', or ignorance of poetic vocabulary; and it should be corrected. There is no evidence for any *ylde* sbv. 'mankind'.

30. *geswided*: note indeclinable use of pp. with *heafde*, followed in the next line (where the participle is further removed from the auxiliary) by a declined form. The sense is not 'perfect', but merely a periphrastic vague 'past'.

33. *ungeara*: MS *ingere*. The correction of in- to un- is not difficult. Klaiber suggested *ungere* 'not long before'. Sedgefield improved this to *ungera*; and, since *ingere* is corrupt anyway, the WS form *ungeara* may be restored, for this is what the scribe would have written if he had recognized the word or been more careful.

*caedum*: has the time-point of author and audience. 'At that time the greatest of nations had but newly been mortally afflicted with the plagues now long ago.'
34. *gedrenced*: the MS has *ged* followed by an erasure, and on it a later hand has written *rened*. The evident motive of the emendation is a verbal connection with the drowning of Egypt, the main theme of the poem. If we reject *gedrenced* as proceeding from the author, guesses at what he did write are limited; e.g. *gedem* (Groth), *gedreced* (Cosijn). The latter is the best suggestion, although it requires an analogical wk. pret. instead of *gedre(a)ht*.

36. *swæf on seledreamus since herofene*: a fine and bold expression in which grammatically *herofene* goes with *seledreamus*, which stands, of course, for men making merry in a king’s or chieftain’s hall. Such men are robbed of treasure by the general mourning. *Hyrre* must be interpreted as instrumental dative.

37. *mūnsecaða* (nom.) must be read; ‘the fell destroyer’. A key is Ps. lxvii.49 (dealing with the plagues) *misit missiones per angelos malos*; 51 *et percussit omneum primogenitum in terra Aegypti*.

38. *frumbearnna feola*: probably we have here unmetrical substitution of a synonym (cf. *god for meted* 414). *Fela* is also wrong scripturally; *frumbearnna gebrwyle* occurs in PP’s 77, 51.

40. *dryrmeye*: retention of the second y is a weak concession to pusillanimous custom; it should be printed *drysmede*. The second r is clearly suspect and probably an error for s. We have then the choice of either *frysman* (related to *prosm* ‘vapour’), in verse only *aprysm* (of the sun) ‘darkened’ Cr 1133, in prose *frysman* ‘choke, stifle’; or *drysmian*, Beow 1375, otherwise unknown. Contextually, this passage (*lyft drysmad, rodeas reviada*) could mean ‘grew gloomy, dark’, but ‘dripped, let fall moisture’ is possible. In both cases, etymological connection with *dreasan* is probable. The Beowulf parallel has it. Occurrence of the rare word in both poems (though corrupted in the less accurate MS) may be added to the list of similarities between them; though certainly only as evidence of their common use of archaic vocabulary, which by chance we know only through them.

41. Editors are too shy of breaking up OE verse into short sharp sentences. We are here being given a rapid survey of the events that led up to the Israelite departure. The sudden interpolation of *dugod ford geman* is typical of the OE method of relating concurrent events, here the departure of the Israelites and the lamentation of Egypt.

43. *blæhtorsæдум*: the Germanizing of the atmosphere should be recognized. A picture is evoked of the harpers striking their harps, and their hands then falling idle.

44. According to OE idiom *leode* must be dative, and *læcid* object of *gretan*; *alysted* (wax) is impersonal. The sense of *gretan* is rare: ‘approach, accost’, here ‘address themselves to’; the nearest parallel is in 181.

46–7. Some (Kock 1918, Bright) have rightly doubted that *hergas* is pl. of *here*. The only alternative is to take it as ‘heathen fanes’. This is supported
strongly by deofolgyld; cf. especially se halga herigees preade, deofolgyld todraf ond gedwolan fyldre, An 1687. In this case, on helte cannot mean 'hellish'; fanes is too local a word. It will be observed that the copyist(s) have invented heofon, which is nonsensical, from some similar-looking word (heaf or dialectal heof). It seems probable that on helte is a similar corruption; and the whole opposition hell/heaven in this line a scribal fiction. In that case the original text may have run herges onheldon heaf pider becom. Blackburn appositely quotes from the ME Genesis and Exodus 3105–8: quane he geden Egipt fro / it wurde orodinre, and fellen do / fele chirches and ideles mide / miracle it was dat god dor dide. The source of the elaboration is probably to be sought, as suggested by Bright, in Num. xxxiii.4: 'For the Egyptians buried all their first-born, which the Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgements.' Emendation to heofung is metrically impossible; the error could as well have proceeded from heof = héaf (as in 35).

49–50. In this difficult passage the real crux is not swa, but feesten. The subject of dreah must be folc, unless our text is corrupt beyond restoration. The sense of swa is probably 'even so', or virtually 'though', as in 82 (see G-K, swa 10). But dreah feesten is almost certainly corrupt. The source of the corruption may be sought in þæs: by repetitive error, of which this MS presents many examples, a word f...n has received as (cf. especially lifde...gelifde 383–4, correctly emended in the MS to geleæd). The word is probably facen; cf. facen 150. The sense 'agere' for dreogan is abundantly evidenced. þæs is antecedent to þas þe 51.

53. on langue lust: this must be an adverbal expression, since the genitive object of wyrnan is sides. We seem obliged then to interpret 'to their long-enduring, unceasing desire'—i.e. the denial caused enduring longing to the Israelites. Cf. the use of on with willan, þenc, unpenc 'to (someone’s) desire, pleasure, displeasure'.

This is the end of the Exordium. The exodus has begun, and the Israelites are on the march. Here, and not at 63, a section-division would have been in place.

57. land ond leodweard: emendation to leodgeard is rash, for this expression occurs also in Gen 1180, 1196, beside land ond leodgeard, Gen 229, 1773. Leodweard applies always to place, not person; so also ecderweard done, Beow 2334. The word certainly means 'rule of people, lordship', but the gender is m.; for which possibly geard, leodgeard may be responsible.

58. This line certainly comes in more naturally in Beow 1408; but this does not prove direct borrowing, only imperfect adaptation of English/ Germanic atmosphere to biblical narrative. The Gudmyrce, dwelling in a dark and misty land, are also borrowed from Northern descriptive ideas.

59–62. It is clear that these lines refer to some point in the march before the pitching of camp in Etham. Actually all the passage 56–62 is probably a representation of Exod. xiii.18, 'But God led the people about through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea: and the children of Israel went up
harnessed out of the land of Egypt', combined, it may be, with vague geographical notions not derived direct from Scripture. The appearance of the Sigelware (Ethiopians) in 69, and the connection made between the heat of their land and the cloud of the Lord, warn us at once that a full explanation of these lines will not be found in the Old Testament.

59. Guðmyrce: these are evidently intended as inhabitants of the undefined wilderness on the borders of Egypt towards the Red Sea. The most likely interpretation is 'warlike borderers'. Myrce was current in England as the name of the people of Mercia, but its relation to mearc 'border' was doubtless apprehended.

61. mearchofu: 'dwellings on the borders'. Since the construction naturally associates these dwellings with the land of the Guðmyrce, the mearc-supports the interpretation of myre as 'borderers'. In morheald, -heald means 'sloping towards', as in suðheald (ON suðhálfr). The sense would be 'sloping down to the desert wastes'. This is not unreasonable, if we take these lines as closely connected with viam deserti quae est juxta Mare Rubrum Exod. xiii.18. It cannot be called over-bold for the poet of Exodus to say 'border-dwellings moorward-sloping', if he meant in full and in prose 'dwellings upon the borders (of Egypt) on fells that sloped down towards the waste'.

61b–2. [There are three drafts of the commentary on these lines, differing in emphasis and expression. Much of the discussion on current emendations of fela and meoringa is now obsolete. Tolkien's final judgement on this passage is summed up in the words 'corruption, possibly far-reaching, is clearly present and no entirely satisfactory solution is possible'. I give a selection of the more interesting points.] fela meoringa: meoringa is undoubtedly corrupt; there is no possibility of interpreting it as it stands from extant OE or Germanic material. If fela is accepted as genuine, the combination represents a noun or adjective; fela never qualifies an adverb. Before a noun, fela is normally enclitic, and it is very rare for fela in this combination to bear sole stave in a-verse. I find 5 examples of fela alliterating with its noun in a-verse (Beow 164, 2266; Dan 15; Desc 49; Prp 67). It bears sole stave in 4 cases in a-verse, 17 in b-verse. Two of the former are from late poems (PPs 77.43, Doom 158). The others are formulas of time-reckoning: fela wintra, Deor 38, fela jusenda, Cr & Sat 400; this special usage accounts for 5 examples in b-verse: e.g. fela missera, Beow 153, 2620; Ex 49. No such formula is suitable in this context. Fela as intensive prefix in adjectival compounds is free from this objection. Eleven different adjectives so compounded are recorded in verse; 8 of these do not alliterate on f. The only one suitable to this passage is felanmodig. Beow 1637, 1888. We may regard the original as possessing feola, which by repetitive error could lend its vowel to the succeeding syllable m ... r, producing an unreal meor- which would remain after the intelligible feola had been West-Saxonized. The corruption was not necessarily a single or a simple process.

63. ymb twa nhti: the Germanic expression for 'after two full days'. The words certainly suggest that our poet in his itinerary included two camps
before Etham, and no less forcibly suggest that for the purposes of his narrative the first two stages were run quickly together, treated as mere preliminaries to the more important later events.

65. *ymbwicigean*: there is no reason to suppose that this verb could be construed with the dative. All the compounds in verse which reveal their construction take accusative of the thing or person surrounded (14 verbs exclusive of *ymbwician*); *byrig* must therefore be taken as accusative plural.

66. *ælfere*: a ‘bad’ form, which should be emended to *æl* (prefix) + *faer* dat. sg. of *faru* ‘expedition, marching army’. The scribe made a false division between *elf* and *ere* at the beginning of the next line, which suggests that he did not recognize the word. There were two Germanic prefixes of similar form which might by phonetic processes become identical in OE, and in any case were similar enough to be scribbally confused, when both were obsolescent: (i) *ala- ‘all, whole, entirely’, (ii) *alja-/ali- ‘other’, hence ‘alien’. (i) > OE *æl*—which early began to be replaced by adj. *eal*, but survives in *ælbeorht, -ceald, -creftig, -meahtig, -tæwe*. (ii) > OE *ele-, el-,* e.g. *elygds, -land, -reord, -pæod, -pæodig (ælspiedig, ælwæht*. There is no good evidence of (i) before nouns in OE (as in Goth. *ala-brunssts*). For decision in the case of *mid ælfere* we must rely on the interpretation of *elfylce*. The sense of *wá* *elfylcum*, *Beowu* 2371 is almost certainly ‘against alien invading hosts’; *on elfylce, El 36* is probably ‘in alien (non-Roman) territory’. On this evidence, *mid ælfere* is likely to mean ‘with an alien (invading) host’. A better emendation would be *elfære*.

*Åethanes byrig*: the Vulgate has *castrametati sunt in Etham in extremis finibus solitudinis* Exod. xiii.20. There is no reason observable why the poem should not have *Etham*, or why the Ethiopians should be mentioned. But the matter becomes clearer if we turn to Ps. lxxiv.14–15, which refers to the deliverance from Egypt: *Tu confregisti capita draconis: dedisti eum escam populis Åethiopum. Tu dirupisti fontes et torrentes: tu siccasti fluvios Ethan. The Paris Psalter has Sigelhearvum and on Åethane for these names. (The Vulgate distinguishes between *Etham* and *Ethan*, which is in fact a Hebrew word meaning ‘strength’: RV Ps. lxxiv.15 has ‘rivers of strength’.) The poet identified *Ethan* of Ps. lxxiv with *Etham* of Exod. xiii.20, in spite of any geographical details. But the identification can already be seen in Ambrose’s *De XLII Mansionibus Filiorum Israel Tractatus* (quoted by Gollancz, p. lxxiii): *Etham nobis sonat fortitudo*. A further point: so far was the poet from bothering about the meanings of Hebrew names that he accepted the Vulgate version, which turned a Hebrew word into a proper name, although this meaning was known to scholars.

68. *nearwe genyddon*: there is no good evidence of *nearu* f. ‘angustia’, as Napier suggested. The verb is therefore intransitive, not *geneddun* ‘forced’, but *geneddun* ‘dared to go, adventured’ (as suggested by Dietrich and accepted by Grein, though later abandoned); the West-Saxonizing scribe has misinterpreted the form. It is here qualified by the phrase *on norðwegas*, in 570 by *frece* adv.; cf. also Gregory’s *Dialogues* (ed. Hecht, 18.10) *poet he to swyde ne wypde v.l. dyrsilcæhe*. So *nearwe* is probably an adverb. In verse
it can be used of pressure, compulsion, or urgency on the part of the subject; cf. neave, E1 1157 of a searching inquiry. 'Urgently' is probably the sense here, and the sentence beginning wiston gives the reason for the urgency.

69. Sigelwara land: this E-type pattern is not paralleled in good OE verse. The form Sigelwara occurs only in verse (apart from Sigelwara in the entry for St. Matthew in the Old English Martyrology, ed. G. Herzfeld, 172): Sigelwara, PP s 71.9; -wara, PPs 86.3; -warum, Ap 64 [all in a-verse, types C or D]. In prose, the universal form is Sigel-, Silhearwas; this occurs once in poetry, Sigileawrum, PPs 73.13 [again in a-verse, type D*]. Sigelhearwas is probably the older form (possibly of native and semi-mythological origin), Sigelwara being an alteration and rationalization. In either form, it is the normal term for Ethiopians; the Latin form is rarely retained. It can be compared with neorunsawang for paradisum, which is likewise of unknown etymology see MAE i (1932), 183–96; iii (1934), 95–111. The actual source of this passage is unknown. It shows a blend of the ancient idea about the baking of the Ethiopians' faces, together with suggestions arising from a comparison of Ps. lxxiii.14–16 with Exod. xiii.20–2. The proximity of this torrid region is also made the explanation of the northward turning of the march of the Israelites. Here, we must read Sigelwara, or else restore Sigelhear(en)a.

70. burhheodum: this should be emended to beorh-, as first suggested by Thorpe. The word is correctly written in 448; the error recurs in 222.

73. bælea: e before l suggests that a non-WS form has been preserved because a scribe could not transpose it. A poetic formula occurs in Gem 54: he him bælc forgide, and so too Jud 267 bælc forgide; this means 'swelling pride, arrogance'; cf. Rid 81.1 beleotesweora 'puff-necked'. The cloud could conceivably be described as a swelling mass. Alternatively, the *balk- stem (referring to wood or beams) is possible. The only recorded representative is bæca, some kind of wooden frame for torture. A mutated derivative of this stem could give a sense 'canopy, roof-like superstructure' suitable to the context.

76. esne: probably an alteration of esre = esfre, partly by association with gjedelan; cf. nefre raises written nefre, Beow 250, and with e for e, neafne, Beow 1353. 'Equally divided' is here nonsense.

79. gedrýmest: the Anglican form gedóm 'jubilant' occurs in PPs 149.5.

dogwælde: emend to -wælde. The form can be regarded as a contaminant of scæad / sceld; for sceld would not be familiar to the scribe (he writes scyld 113, 125), whereas scæad is a WS form.

81–5. svegla: certainly an error for segle (so Thorpe). The poet uses 'sail' with fine effect here, and clever later elaboration. Segl is apt as describing the texture of something woven (nette 74) which a cloud may imaginatively be thought to possess; its whiteness shining with sunlight (78) and yet absorbing the sun's heat; and also its onward motion, directing the march. In 103 we perceive a further element in the conception—the combined
influence of ancient native poetry with its gallant searovers, and the
imminence of the passage of the Red Sea, is filling the poet's mind with old
sea-language, until he can actually call the Israelites semen. Yet an
ingenious change is made at 85: the army halts, a camp is prepared; and the
cloud becomes a pavilion. That is with a single stroke; while the texture,
and the colour and light are preserved, the march is arrested. Feldhussa maest
is used not recklessly, or in an aimless search for variation, but to mark the
halt. The artistry of the language here should affect our judgement of the
apparent confusions in the passage beginning 93 ff.

86-7. siddan . . . pa: pa is a frequent correlative to siddan, and we should
expect siddan . . . to frofre to be connected. But syddan usually introduces
a verb following the main clause, not preceding it. The order Da wæs . . .
syddan + subject of clause occurs e.g. in Bèow 980-2, 1306-8, 2472-4,
2957-60.

87. pridda wic: emend pridda, cf. 133 feorde wic. The error is probably due
to partial alteration of pridda > priddan, because wic was normally used in
the plural (sometimes with singular sense, as castra).

91-2. The agency of God himself is not seen in Exod. xiii.21 castrametati
sunt in Ethan; but it is indicated in Deut. i.32-3 et nec sic quidem crediditis
Domino Deo vestro qui processit vos in via et metatus est locum in quo tentoria
figere deberetis . . . (the words of Moses).

93 ff. Here we have to consider a vexed point in the criticism of Exodus. The
narrative becomes confused, indeed unintelligible. The credit of perceiv-
ing the confusion and divining its cause belongs to Napier. But the trans-
position proposed by Gollancz (pp. lxx and lxxxi) is superior to Napier's.
Both assume that the passage 108-24 stands in the wrong position, having
been shifted by one of the accidents of transmission. Gollancz transposes as
follows: after 92—

108-24 (17 lines)
93-107 (15 lines)
125 ff.

The technical question of how the displacement occurred has been mixed
with the purely critical examination of the text. The answer to the technical
question is unlikely to be decisively given: the range of possibilities is wide,
and we are operating in the unknown. But we can be certain of the fact of
displacement. (It is perhaps worth noting that Him 93 has a somewhat large
initial h. A similar large h occurs in 120 [these are among the 20 small
capitals in the text, noted by Gollancz and confirmed by P. J. Lucas, p. 19].
Then at 107 we have a section-division, and space for an initial, in the
middle of a sentence. It is plain that these arrangements do not descend
from the author.

85-92, 108-24, 93-107. We have had a full description of the 'pillar' of
cloud. Now it is halted like a great pavilion over them (85). They can see its
sails (tent-wings) hovering motionless (hlifedon 89) above them, shining
still in the sun. But it is the end of the day (camping-time 92). And so we
proceed naturally to evening (אֶפְסֶנָה עֵֽגְוָם 108). As soon as the sun has sunk, a new wonder appears: a burning column (111). Its function is to give them light, to drive off all dangers (116–17)—that is, the poet conceives of it as a divine watchfire—and also (an original touch) to enforce discipline, a divine sentinel. Having described the two ‘pillars’ in proper sequence and at the time of their first manifestation, the poet adds that these ever preceded them in their march (93–7). So ends the third camp. In 98–107, 125–9 we have a description of the following morning, the fourth day of marching: the summoning and marshalling of the host, the arising of the cloud which is their standard and guide (107); and the fourth halt, made necessary by the barrier of the sea (128) which prevented further advance.

This narrative adheres to the sequence of Exod. xii.37, xiii.20–2, xiv.1, 2 (and Num. xxxiii.5–7); but it supplements the bare words of these passages with suggestions drawn from various sources: passages from Deuteronomy and the Psalms, a little easily obtained ‘learning’ about Ethiopians and their skins, and above all a vivid and pictorial imagination, familiar with this island and English traditions. From this last source we get the mists (60); the warlike trappings and vocabulary; the signals for pitching and striking camp (132, 222); the idea of watchfires in the wilderness. At only one point is a straightforward sequence interrupted, at 93–7 which on this arrangement must apply to the future marches. This simply repeats the apparently general reference of the basic passage in Exod. xiii.20–2, where the cloud and fire are first mentioned. But the breaking of sequence is nothing as compared to the situation if the MS order is retained, for then two pillars (94) will be mentioned before the second has been yet described—and then as a fresh wonder (108) and a new nightwatchman (116), appearing on the fourth day contrary to scriptural narrative.

109. after suman setlrade: it might be thought that wundor could be subject of behealdan in the sense ‘occupy’; it appeared in that part of the sky. But setlrad is hardly a possible object, for (like setlgang) it is a noun of action. It is important to note that rad does not normally mean ‘road’, but the action of riding or travelling. Streamrad = alveus in early glossaries might argue for an exceptional use; but in OE verse this compound means ‘voyage’. The ‘kenning-compounds’ hornrad, sworad, etc. mean ‘sea’; not as ‘whale-road’ but ‘whale-riding’, by the special ellipsis whereby the ‘kenning’ suggests ‘(fields) where the whale rides like a horse on land’. In fact, after suman setlrade is a formula that cannot be dismembered. It is a poetic variant of the prose expression after suman setlgange (so ASC D s.a. 744, and the prose version of Gen. xxviii.11). Therefore we cannot emend away this expression to provide a subject sumne for beheold. The real difficulty is that behealdan is never construed with an infinitive in OE; this is natural enough in view of the verb’s origin and sense-development. To retain beheald we should be driven to further emendation: lige sciman 7 liges sciman. Since beheold is the central difficulty, it is better to assume that this word is corrupt. I propose bebead, carrying on from the subject drihten in the preceding sentence (92). The antecedent form could be bebead, which in the inverted order of this sentence would have no apparent meaning;
whereas wundor, the leading word in the context, suggests behoold in the sense 'observed, gazed at'.

111. byrnende beam: this must be accusative, but there is no need to emend. The masc. acc. of the pres. p. occurs frequently as -ende; cf. cnhtwesende, Beow 372.

113. scyldhroedan: 'phalanx, closed ranks of men with shields touching'; the word is actually glossed 'testudo' three times. A sense 'shield' is not attested by under hordhroedan 236; for the phrase describes a man standing in the closed ranks of the 'shield-wall'; cf. Ælfric’s Grammar, under piccum scildtruman = densa testudine.

118. har heð: Riegel’s emendation heðstapa should be accepted. This compound (unlike heðbroga) does occur, in Beow 1368 and in Fates 13. The terror of the waste described in wolvish language helps to elucidate the next line.

121. h swoepp: hawópan is a verb peculiar to Gothic and OE. In origin it is probably onomatopoeic; but as is usual with such words it is not created in the void, but formed by suggestions from other words; in this case wóþjan (wëpan), hróþjan (hrópan). Its original sense would thus be 'shout aloud'. The Gothic sense 'boast' shows a natural semantic change. In OE the sense is 'threaten', usually, as here, with a connotation of noise.

124. Mayjes: since hyran in the sense 'obey' takes the dative, we should have Mayse; but usage in biblical and classical names was not rigidly fixed.

93. Him: repeats, after a definite pause in the narrative, hie 124.

94. beamas: beam represents columna 'pillar' of Exod. xiii.21–2. The sense 'beam of light' is not found in OE except in a context and with qualifiers that make it clear; e.g. blace beamas 121, fyrene loccas 120. The sense 'light-ray' was probably nothing more than a particular application of beam 'tree, pillar'. Cf. the development of Lat. radius 'pole, spoke; ray of light', Ger. Strahl (OE strel 'arrow'), Eng. 'shaft of light'.

95. efngedælde: the sense of gedælan is here not 'separate one thing from another distinct thing' but 'divide into portions'. The compound then means 'shared as companions'; cf. enñproswian 'share in suffering, have compassion'.

104. lifes latpeow: the expression 'guide to Life (Salvation)' is found also of God in El 520, 898. To fully understand it here it is necessary to remember that Exodus throughout treats the escape of Israel as at once a historical narrative and a symbol of the soul’s journey to the promised land of Salvation. Even so, the repetition lifes/lifweg is open to criticism. Lifweg metan seems to me weak, since all that it means is contained in lifes latpeow. An original lyftweg could have been mistakenly written lifweg under the influence of lifes. Lyftweg is more forcible; the host of Israel looks up and sees the divine guide to Salvation already ascending the sky.
105–6. swelegt side weold: the emendation segl is obviously right. A similar error occurred in sweogle 81 (under the influence of sunnan) for segle. Here the error is more explicable if lyftweeg preceded. Segl is apt here. Not only does it indicate that the cloud is in motion again, but it introduces, in conjunction with seomen and flodwege, the idea that this march was to end by the sea. Flodweeg normally means 'path over the sea' (Seaf 52), but the sense here, 'path towards the sea', is no more strained than in medostigge, Beow 924 'paths towards the mead (hall)'. For the construction with instrumental (or locative) dative, cf. El 215 feran flodwege (MS fold-).


107. heofonbeacen astah: the reference is almost certainly to the cloud. At the same time, the statements scean scir werod etc. do show that full day had appeared; this is a stage beyond the trumpet-calls at dawn (98 ff.).

127. segn: either masc. or n. in OE. In Beowulf it is n. in 2767, 2776, 2958, masc. in 47, 1021. Here it is n., since fes agrees.

130. geneegdon: (ge)nēgan (usually assumed to be connected with nēah) probably originally had a neutral sense: if the etymology is correct, 'approach', hence, 'acost, address'. But it was obsolescent and poetical, and apart from the formula wordum (ge)nēgan was usually associated with the unrelated gelmēgan 'humiliate, afflict', and so appears only in a hostile sense 'assail' (geneegan was even spelt with hn; so Beow 2206, 2916). This passage seems to be a solitary example of its older use.

130–1. The 'repairing of strength' is clearly the action of the eaters, parallel to sceaptan hie. We have an intercalated independent sentence, the usual way in OE poetic narrative of representing two different actions going on at the same time. An extreme example is 155–60.

132. breddon . . . feldhusum: bredan is not one of the words we should expect to have the dative, for it is properly a causative, 'open out, expand'; it is nowhere else so construed (cf. Epist. Alex., ure geteld breddon). The syntax is probably due to the usage of bregdan as in the closely parallel passage 222–3.

beorgum: beorg is not only 'mountain', but also 'pile, heap, mound'. As such it was applied to the banks, cliffs, and sloping lands of the shore; cf. seaheorga sand 442.

133. folan: this is typical of the allusive and connotative diction of OE verse. A good poet would use a word not literally applicable, both to colour the passage with emotions aroused by words drawn from different matter, and in circumstances which gave the word some point—here the encampment on the shores, and the imminence of the crossing. Such uses are only possible at the end of the development of a native tradition.
COMMENTSARY

136. oht: the word occurs elsewhere only in Gen 84 (where the precise meaning is not clear) and Beow 2957 aht, a scribal form for *oht 'pursuit'. The preservation of the word in correct form and clear original sense is one of the notable archaisms of this poem.

egsan stodon: the usual full construction is seen in Beow 783, and in most complete form Dan 524. But here we have no word expressing the source or the recipient; stodon is simply 'was imminent' (so too 491, and II 113).

139. ḫonnied: another of the archaic words preserved in Exodus; the cognate of ON ñauð 'constraint, bondage'. The original spelling could be onned, cf. Bede's Death Song (MS St. Gall 254) neidfære.

140. wæn wítum fæst: the reference is to the plagues (so wítum 33), from which the Egyptians are quite naturally regarded as still suffering. Feastw would be correct, agreeing with lastweard, but a nominative by attraction to the intervening relative clause is quite reasonable. For genitive wæn (punishment for) cf. Gen. 2693.

141-2. Two leaves have been lost in the middle of the gathering, and it is difficult to decide what is missing. A short summary of the more important points that might be fitted in between these lines, considering what is said in Scripture, would run something like this: 'They heeded not their compact although the older king had . . . made a treaty, granting the land of Goshen to Joseph's kindred, for them to dwell in it in peace and plenty (Gen. xlv.16-20, xlvii.3-6). For the king loved Joseph. He had made him his chief ealdorman. In seven years of plenty, he gathered corn 'as the sand of the sea', and stored it (Gen. xli.46). In time of famine he sold corn for the money, cattle, and lands of all the inhabitants, 'so the land became Pharaoh's'; and he saved the lives of the people (Gen. xlvii.13-26). Then Joseph died and all his generation. The children of Israel multiplied, 'and the land was filled with them'. A new king arose 'which knew not Joseph' (Exod. i.8), though he inherited all the wealth gained by Joseph for Pharaoh. Then the Egyptians forgot all this, and became hostile, fearing that the Hebrews would join their enemies in war (Exod. i.10).

Much less may have been said. Clearly, no mention was made of later events after the beginning of the oppression by Pharaoh. The poet has made this retrospective pause to mark the passage of time between the first rumour of the pursuit by the Egyptians and their visible approach. He seems to have used this opportunity to stress the double treachery of Egypt to Israel: they broke the original promises of 'the elder king', enslaving the Hebrews and not allowing them to depart; then at last, forced by the slaying of the first-born, they allowed the Hebrews to leave, but suddenly revoked the permission by an unexpected attack—just as they came to the barrier of the sea, and could not escape. At 144, the author is making haste to get back to that situation, having the whole course of events in his mind, from the coming of Joseph to Egypt to the trapping of the Hebrews by the sea. But, as in his exordium (1-54), the event most prominent in his thought is the death of the first-born, which was the setting of the exodus, of the meæ dæg (47) when at last Israel was set free. To that event dæggwæorc 151 refers.
48

COMMENTARY

(c.f. 199). It is thus most likely to be the key to the interpretation of the corrupt and obscure an twig 145.

142. ūingefolca: this word contains the prefix in- (in its frequent sense 'belonging to the household, home, or native land'). It is seen in ūingemen 190 and in the corrupt incadeode 443. With ingefolca, cf. inhere 'home forces' as against athere 'enemy forces'. As it stands, it must mean 'peoples of the land (of Egypt)'. The author elsewhere regards the Egyptians as one people, and the plural is probably an error for ingefolces, under the influence of the following manna.

143. after: must here be temporal, 'after, in consequence of'; and therefore mædm must have its full sense of 'gift, especially a gift of exchange'. Cf. Maxims I 154-5 mædm (sceal) apres weord; gold sceal mon gifan: that is, it must refer to the money, lands, and herds given in exchange for corn.

145. ymb an twig: this half-line is metrically defective. It must originally have been Type B or C: an—wig or antwig-. The only word closely resembling the corrupt an twig and showing a possible sense is seen in andwiges heard, Gud 176; here andwige should mean 'hostile resistance'. But ymb andwige is impossible, because ymb is always construed with the accusative. It is just possible that we have a n.-ja-stem *twige, as in ON einwigi 'single combat' beside wig 'resistance, battle'. Andwige could then refer to the rebellion of Israel (Exod. iv.29) and the ensuing plagues, leading to the death of the first-born; ymb will be used in the temporal sense 'after' (so 63). Notice that ymb cannot be used with gram to indicate a cause of wrath; the sense 'concerning' always points to the object of attention, not the cause.

146. ǣda heo heo: I suggest ǣda heo heora; heo is m. pl., as in 587. Cyn is sg., but it is usually treated as a collective and takes a plural verb, as here grame wurdon; I think therefore that heora is an error for heora, referring to cyn, and is probably a mistaken addition in this confusion of number. Translate: 'when they (the Israelites) had inflicted death upon their (the Egyptians') dear kinsmen'.

147. wrohta: (related to wreggan) probably in origin meant 'accusation' or counter-accusation; but it had plainly come to mean a cruel act of revenge (cf. Beowow 2473).

149. ūmihtmod: 'mighty wrath', is isolated, but it is likely to be genuine. The first element is probably adj. mealt [as in Ph 377, Cr 868], which should not show mutated forms; but since mealt- in IWS, mihtmod might contain a false transposition of older mealt- , mealt-. The combination of adj. + qualified noun might be an ancient syntactic feature; cf. waldfeond, healheorg, etc. in verse.

150. ūfeorhlean: lean means primarily 'a recompense for a benefit'; the benefit repaid is normally expressed as a genitive, as in peas deagweorc . . . lean 507, but occasionally in a compound, as in dædellean 263. The feorhlean refers to the acts of Joseph in saving the Egyptians from famine, and the exodus is regarded as a long-delayed act of gratitude.
151. *he:* clearly an error for *hi|hie,* induced by the apparently sg. *gebohte,* which is archaic pret. subj. pl.; so 124, 244, 365, 366.

157. *oferholt:* the leading sense of *holt* was ‘growing wood, thicket’. So in compounds: e.g. *escholt* ‘thicket of ashen spears’, *garholt,* Beow 1834, which is not ‘spear-shaft’, for Beowulf was promising to bring an army. *Ofer-* could refer to the tips of raised spears; but it is probably an error for *eofor-.* A *holt* was the right place to look for boars (*eofor sceal on holte,* Maxims II 19); but the boars in this thicket were boar-crests, and the forest was moving.

158. *gudu hwearfode:* *gudu* is half-personified, since frequentative *hwearfian* means ‘turn and turn again, go to and fro’; cf. *Fins 34 hræfen swandrode.*

160. *peode mearc tredan:* acc. *peode* would not scan. Therefore *peodemearc* must be a compound: they saw ‘a trampling of the people’s borderlands’, i.e. Egyptians marching on the confines of their own country.

158–60. The Egyptian army is being described in 156–60. I feel as certain as one can in such matters that *pufas ... tredan* 160 is displaced and should follow *lixan* 157 (so Grein, Kluge). We then get a sequence perfectly in style: the staccato but still connected *gesawon ... wegian ... lixan ... punian ... tredan.* Then the series of 158–9, showing that the Egyptian army is getting nearer, and their signals can be heard. Then suddenly (161 ff.) the ominous signs of death.

161. *on hwael, hwreopan:* almost a whole line has been dropped. Blackburn was the first to see that the omission was between *hwael* and *hwreopan,* the cause was most likely inattention, since *hwreopan* is an impossible form showing the influence of *hwael.* We cannot now recapture what is lost, but Blackburn makes a good suggestion: *on hwael *(mere hreo wæron yda).*

162. The *herefugolas* accompanying the wolf as picker of the slain were traditionally the raven and the eagle. The old poets usually took any opportunity that occurred for bringing in this, originally, grim piece of realism, which had however become patterned and conventionalized (long before any text that we have now was first composed). It had deep roots, being connected with the beliefs and symbols of pagan cults; especially the dark and necromantic associations of Woden/Øddin (with Øddin as *hængagud,* cf. Beow 2444–9). In full battle-pieces, the raven, wolf, and eagle occur. This passage has some features found elsewhere, and some peculiar ones. *Deawigfedera* is applied to the eagle in *Gen 1984,* cf. also *urigfedera* in the battle-pieces *El 29, Jud 210,* and in *Seaf 24–5.* *Worn* is applied to the raven in *Gen 1983,* Beow 3024, *El 53, Jud 206.* With the phrase *etes on swean* cf. *Gen 1985.* *Singan* is applied to the wolf in *wulf song ahof,* *El 112,* cf. also *fyrdleod agol wulf on swealde,* *El 27–8.* Neither *hræfn nor earn* are named here. An archaic term *drithneas* is used for the corpses on the field of battle; *næ* is an old word (Goth. *naus, nawi-,* ON *nær*) found occasionally as the first element of compounds, and possibly in *orcneas,* Beow 112. There is a ‘kenning’ *waelceasega* for raven. Principal attention is paid to the wolf, which is described as *fæyldrof* 166, a term usually misinterpreted.
I propose to read *hildigedig deawigfederh* = eagle, and *weonn waelceasega* (-cesga) = raven; these two specify the *herefugolos*. The influence of this plural term (combined with scribal ignorance) would account for the plurals *gredige* and *fehere*.

164. §weeleasega: no doubt derived from a genuine ‘kenning’. The original form is not accurately preserved or correctly modernized; *eøsigicøsiga* shows the stem seen in *cies* adj. ‘dainty about food’. Thus, ‘one that habitually picks over the weal’. The word and form are not the same as the ancient battle-term *walcyriage* = ON *valkyria* (though probably made in knowledge and imitation of it). In this word -ig- is not adjectival, but derived from [j] preserved after [r]: i.e. a feminine agental noun *walakuzjón* ‘picker or chooser of the slain’. The word was probably very ancient, though it is found only in OE and ON. It derived partly from the actual carrion-birds of battle, transformed in mythological imagination; partly from the necromantic practices of the female followers of Odinic magicians. In OE the word is used to gloss *Bellona*, or *Erians*, or another of the Furies; in Wulfstan’s *Sermo ad Anglos* it occurs in a context suggesting more degraded practices.

166. §cuylidraf: probably does not contain *cuylid* (found only in OE) ‘perdition, death’, which is related to *cuwelan* ‘die’ and carries a passive sense. A cognate of ON *kveld* ‘evening, last light’ survived in OE, although it was obsolescent: so *cuyltidid* ‘evening’, *cuylseten* ‘setting in of night’, *cuylrede, -hrepe* ‘bat’. This seems to be an echo of a dark pagan word which consorts well with *drihtneum* and *weeleasega*.

*beodm*: since the metre requires a short root-syllable, this should be *bidon*; cf. VP *abiodun*, Beow 3169 *riodan* ‘they rode’. *Bidan* ‘await’ is most often construed with genitive object, but there are clear cases of the accusative. However, *bidon* ‘announced’ would also fit.

167. *ful*: must be emended to *fuilisell* ‘slaughter’. An archaic spelling *fuell(t)* could conceivably be confused with *fall* or *full*.

169. *feog feoge gast*: Blackburn was right in viewing *gast* as an alteration of *geist|gast* ‘stranger’; the word is in any case representative singular. Confusion of *geist|gast* with *gest|geist|gyst* is found only in verse texts, in the course of transposing West Midland forms into IWS. It is partly explained by the frequency of West Midland *e* = WS *æ*. Thus *gast* is the form for ‘stranger’ in Beow 1800, 1893; so too the more archaic sense ‘hostile alien’ (applied to the dragon) appears as *geist* in Beow 2312, 2670, 2690. Meaning must also have played a part; the sense ‘(hostile) alien’ was probably obsolete when our late copies of verse texts were made. Also, contact between the senses ‘visitor’ and ‘spectre’ is evident in the examples quoted from Beowulf.

*feoge*: the sense ‘afraid’ suits this context, since the Israelites were not doomed to die. This meaning certainly occurs in the phrase *forht and feoge*. It should be read in Wandel 68 ne to forht ne to feagen (for many of the textual errors in this poem consist of omitting *n* or inserting it wrongly); the *ne to* phrases here are litotes for ‘not at all’.
fleah: in OE verse the simple past tense was much used for continuous, uncompleted or inceptive action. The sense here is ‘turned to flee’.

gehæged: since the metre requires ~, this cannot be connected with the ‘hedge’ word. Bouterwek’s gehæged is clearly right; the sense is ‘dejected’ i.e. ‘robbed of valour’.

172. segncyning: gives no good sense, and the repetition of segn is peculiarly pointless. At the same time, sigecyning would give very dubious metre. I think sige- has been altered by anticipation of segn; but also that -cyning has been substituted for its synonym -dryhten. Cf. 92, where drihten has probably been substituted for waldend.

wid pone segn foran: note the archaic word-order.

173. †mearchpreat: the comitative use of the instrumental dative. The pret is called a mearchpreat because it was then on the borders of Egypt.

174-5. grimhelm gespeon ... cinberge: ‘he clasped the masked helm with the chin-guard’, i.e. he drew down his vizor and fastened it to the chin-guard. This is more precise than most references to armour in OE poetry; cinbeorg occurs here only in verse, and in an unaltered Anglian form. The action is a sign that battle was near.

176. on wenum: so 213, and on wenan 165; both probably wenan ‘expectation’ rather than wen f. (on wenf sg. does not occur in verse).

hwæthlencan: evidently an error for wæl-, as in †twelnet 202; cf. wealhlencan n. pl. El 24, †hlencan acc. pl. 218.

seeoc: ‘he shook down his coat of mail’; the long hauberker would ruckle up in riding, and needed to be shaken down before battle was joined. Cf. syrcan hryshedon, Beow 226, where (pace Klaeber) the Geats shook out their mail-shirts as they disembarked (hryssian is a transitive verb).

178. freond on sicon: exemplifies the principle that dialectal or archaic forms are most likely to slip through in connection with an error. If the copyist had recognized sēgon he would have changed it to WS sāwon. There is no such verb as onseon in OE; on here is an adverb, as in 278; cf. weras on sawon, Beow 1650.

180. wegan: not intransitive in OE. This fact, combined with imperfect metre, indicates that an object has been omitted; it would refer to weapons or armour (cf. 157, 574). Wæpn is the probable word, for it would help to explain the jump to wægon.

wigend unforhtē: so also 328b. The scansion of this half-line would be solved by reading wigan; but the substitution is unlikely, because wiga is the rarer word. However, it is possible that wigend existed beside wigend. The old short (aorist) grade *wig- is known to have coexisted with the full grade *wih-/twig- in this verb: usually it became *wegan in Gmc.; so ON vega, OE gewegan Beow 2400, bewegen and forwegen, BMald 183, 228. An infinitive wigan occurs in verse only in Beow 2509 and BMald 126, both of which could have a short stem. Thus an old word *wigands ‘fighter’ could become partly assimilated to the infinitive wigan, while wigend survived in a few set phrases.
181. *hare thewralulfas*; to appreciate this concise and forceful expression, we should recognize that *har* was associated both with armour (especially the *byrne*), and that wolves were associated with warriors, especially with attacking or pursuing enemies.

183. *alesen:* the rhythm with delayed rising stress (A 3) is frequently used in paragraph-openings, especially in the form with ‘have’+p. part. *Hæfde him alesen* does not scan, but probably only the inflexional -e has been omitted: *alesene* agrees with *dugede* (acc. rather than gen.), or possibly with *pusendo*.

185. *pet weorun:* *weorun,* because *pusendo* is pl.; *pet* is ‘all these, what we have been describing’, for n. sg. in such cases is normal OE idiom.

184-9. The figure 2,000 does not derive from Scripture. According to Exod. xiv. 7 Pharaoh took ‘six hundred chosen chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt, and captains of (duces) over every one of them’. On this basis, the poet could form a picture of the king (*gudweard gumena*) with his own picked troops; and of the captains each bringing with him a personal following. Since Scripture gives no definite account of the Egyptian organization, the poet probably assumed that it would be similar to that of Israel. Certainly a parallelism between the two troops is conveyed in verbal echoes: Egypt, *hereciste 177, alesene(e) leoda dugede tircadigra tua pusendo 183-4,* *edelum deoor 186;* Israel, *cystra geolswe 230, edelam cymmes alesen under lindum leoda dugede 227-8, tircadigra 232.* The total of the Israelite force is given as 603,359 (Num. i. 46), as 600,000 (Exod. xii. 37). The organization was tribal, and depended on blood-right. Thus Moses, the supreme commander, had in his personal following twelve chieftains, each chief by right of lineage and commander of a host. Thus each captain could be regarded as a *cyning* at the head of his *cyman;* all were related, in direct line of descent from Jacob. This organization of the Israelite army is reflected in *cyningas ond cenrramagas.* The number of Pharaoh’s host had in fact been calculated and was a piece of traditional lore, reproduced in the fragment *Pharaoh* of the *Exeter Book.* The text (incomplete through damage to the MS) reads: **"Tell me what was the number of the whole host of Pharaoh’s army, when they in their enmity set out in pursuit of God’s people.”** **“I do not know it at all, but I think this: that there was reckoned in number of chariots six hundred... of armed men; all that the wave... destroyed etc.”** The 600 chariots are derived from Exod. xiv.6-7; but it is clear that this was regarded only as the number of Pharaoh’s personal host, and the total was vaster. Frankly, I do not understand the reason for *tua pusendo.*

186. *on pet eade riht:* there is no such adjective as *ead* in OE. It is supposed to occur in *ic pe ead meæg... on gecyðan, Jul 352-3.* But in the context this seems to be an error for *ic pe eade meæg;* cf. *ead* for *eade* in Gen 2058. Kluge was right to emend to *eald.* For the term, cf. *Beow 2330; eald* means almost ‘historical/Scriptural’ in *edelam witum 33 and ealdwérisge 50.*

190-1. *ingemen: in-gemen* belongs to a large group of words in which the prefix means ‘belonging to a household’ (see below on *incaþode 444*) or native land; see on *ingefolca 142.*
cyningas is best explained as an error for cyninges, influenced by -as above; though confusion of -es- as is not infrequent in verse texts. All the household troops were in the king's escort.

191. cud: here probably 'familiar'; the horn gave recognized signals. No doubt the herebyman 99 were blowing a recognized reveille. Again, a single trumpeter gave the signal for tent-pitching (132) and another signal for striking tents (222).

gebad: plainly an error for gebead; cf. Ph 497 æriste... beodeode brego engla byman stefne.

194. eorp: 'dark, swarthy'. Quite apart from Latin learning, the northern peoples knew by rumour of the dark Mediterranean faces, as of the Nubian blackness of the Sigelheorwian further south.

194 f. ecan leddon: the subject of leddon is probably the Egyptians in general; ecan has given trouble. There is no reason in the narrative for eacan 'reinforcements', and the apposition to eorp werod would be awkward. If we read ec on leddon, swa will refer forward: 'so, next'. We have had the royal household troops, the great captains and feudal lords, now we have the main mass of the army, the leoddægnes sworn: 'next there were led forth also the swarthy companies etc.'. By this reading, on is a stressed adverb, ec (eac) an unstressed particle; for this treatment of eac, cf. Beow 388a, Cri 1152b, 1163b.

197-8. Something is wrong with the repeated to pam. Elsewhere ærdæg is always used with mid or samod. But to ærdege is a possible variation on to morgne, as in An 220–1, mid ærdege, emne to morgene. Once this phrase was modernized to to pam ærdege, it could influence the preceding comitative dative pam meægheapum.

202. weredon wealnet: the verb is ambiguous. Werian1 properly means 'to clothe, wrap', with instrumental of the thing used. This sense is then syntactically excluded. Werian2 is 'to defend, ward off', with accusative of the thing protected or repelled; werian, bewerian can also mean 'to prohibit, restrain, hinder' [in PP's and prose texts, especially the translation of Bede].

What then is the subject? The Israelites cannot be said to 'defend their mail-shirts' by comparison with 236–7, breostnet... folmum werigean; for these lines describe the action of warriors in battle. Here there is sudden surprise and a wail of alarm. †Wealnet must therefore be subject, as egesan is of stodon. It need not mean 'mail-shirts', in spite of weallencan 176, breostnet 236, and herenet, hringsnet, and searoneht in Beowulf. Searoneht, An 64 and searonehtum, An 945 refer to the restraints by which Matthew is bound in prison. These uses are more natural and functional, since nett is a device for catching and holding. The -net compounds in Beowulf (and Ex 236) are more fanciful and pictorial, showing a hyperbolic craft-analogy, which is explicit in byrne... searoneht seowed, Beow 405–6. It seems that in †wealnet, net has its functional sense: the Israelites were caught in 'deadly toils'. But can weredon then mean 'hindered'? No case is expressed; but these staccato phrases are elliptical and their construction is not complete.
COMMENTARY

(Stodon is not accompanied by indication of source or recipient). Weredon may well be corrupt, since welnet interpreted as byrne would suggest clothing. If so, the alternative is wyrgean ‘choke, strangle’ (OHG wurgan), which appears only in the gloss wyrgeap: strangulat. Note the parallel passages 136–7, 491–2; in all three cases egesan stodon is accompanied by a wæl- compound.

203. ammod: án- is proved by the variant onmod, An 54, Guð 717, Finsh 12. Also by its derivative ammeda ‘high spirit, presumptuous pride’.

204. ðwæglac: blæc is usually applied to fire and light; this sense would be merely pictorial, with no contextual contrast. But blæc can indicate pallor, especially in its derivatives blæcung, blacian, and blasco. It is used of the pallor of death, or approaching death: cf. Hid 278, Beow 2488; the ME Sawles Warde [ed. R. M. Wilson, Leeds Monographs iii (1938), 63–4] his leor deadlich on blæc. The Israelites were at this point still unmarshalled, disorganized, and despairing (Exod. xiv.10 timuerunt valde). Notice the antithetical passage when the Egyptians are the flogblac here, 497.

wlancia forsecaf: the meaning of forscyfan is not entirely clear. The sense ‘thrust apart’ cannot be altogether dismissed, and in that case wlancia would apply to both the armies ‘in proud array’. But the interpretation of wægblac is against this. The more probable sense is ‘thrust off, repel’, taking wlancia of the Egyptians; cf. wælc peode 486.


207. sid wes gedæled: a final disconnected concluding phrase was often used in OE verse to close a paragraph. There is now a respite, from nightfall to daybreak. Nothing more will be heard of the Egyptians for some time. The poet is going to occupy the interval with an account of the organization of Israel and the way it escaped from bondage; also, he will recapitulate the title of Israel to the Promised Land, beginning with the escape of the family of Noah from the greatest of all floods.

210. he{yarfi: literally ‘turning’, here ‘change of direction’. Mara has not its commonest sense ‘greater’, but ‘more, further; hence ‘they had no further (room/chance for) turning’, there was no way of escape left.

212. in blæcum reafum: not here ‘bright’ with reference to the glitter of metal. This is eal sceo sibgedriht, the whole people of Israel. Even the fighting-men would not wear armour all night; indeed, they were summoned at dawn to put on their armour (216–19). Merre also requires blæcum, since an opening weak syllable was carefully avoided in Type A in the b-line. Precisely what the poet intended is not clear, unless it was a sombre colour-symbol to go with wean on wenum.

216. benum: obviously an error for bennum; again, a non-WS form has caused the transcriber to make a mistake. There is no mention of trumpets in Scripture at this point, and the poet is probably drawing on native
tradition. But Num. x.1-10 contains detailed regulations for the use of trumpet-signals; these trumpets were to be made of silver.

218. Cf. Finsb. 11 habbad eowre handa (usually emended linda), hicegad on ellen; also HMald 4.

220-1. snelle: pl. adj., agreeing with weardas; these may be sentinels, but weard is so frequently used of a governor or man in charge that the meaning is probably 'officers'.

222. byman: probably acc. sg., since byme 132 gave the corresponding signal for pitching tents.

224 ff. These arrangements and calculations do not of course come from the Book of Exodus, nor directly from any part of Scripture. They depend largely on the accounts of the numbering of Israel in Num. i and xxvi. Num. i gives the figures of each of the twelve divisions in effective fighting men, with the names of their twelve captains. The total was 603,550 (Num. i.46), agreeing closely enough with the figure of Exod. xii.37 'about 600,000 on foot'.

225. Forsöcherche: 'van' is not quite accurate, since this is not the forward part of the here, but the here that went ahead. Fedu 'company of men on the march' has no precise numerical significance; in native contexts it was applied to quite small bands. It is chosen here for the great tribal divisions, probably because they were on foot (Exod. xii.37).

229. cista: also of no clear numerical significance. It is a speciality of this poet's. Cist as a simplex occurs only in this poem (220, 230); so too the compounds lgudecyst 343, ihrecist 177, 257, -cyst 301. Elsewhere there is only eoredcyst 'troop of cavalry' Pan 52, Ph 325, Brun 21, El 36. Since the feminine gender is clear, I believe this cist/cyst to be merely a special use of cyst f. 'choice, the best part of anything' (not so Holthausen, Altenglisches etymologisches Wörterbuch (1934), s.v. ciest).

226. mode rofa: clearly genitive plural is required, as in 231, 232, 247. Instrumental dative can be used to show the source or location of a quality (cf. 'strong in courage'), though genitive as in modes rofan 98 is much more frequent; cf. mode rof, An 625, 984.

230. cud: probably 'well-known, famous in history'; but it could be 'akin', since in some uses it develops towards 'familiar, friendly'.

233-4. gretton in: since it is clear that we are dealing with admission into the rinc-getal, Grein-Köhler is probably right in glossing gretan as 'summon'; this nonce-usage is a branch of the meaning 'hail, accost'. The scriptural basis is Num. i.3.

236. bordhreodon: 'phalanx, serried rank' rather than 'shield'; see note above on scylhreoda 113, and cf. bordhreodon 189, and especially 320, where the sense must be 'ranks'. Under is the correct idiomatic term for standing in a scylhdtruma; it is also used of anybody or anything inside a closed space, as under burglocan, etc.
237. *flæh* occurs twice elsewhere in verse, and in the EE Glossary, *flæch*: *infestus*; it was apparently influenced by the rhyming word *flæh*, and there is an evident association between perfidy and hostility. Probable cognates are ON *flár* ‘treacherous’ and OHG *fléhan* ‘adulari, blandiri’. A verb *uf-* ‘speak false’ < OE *flæð(a)n* survives in ME (AB language of Hali Meithad, S. Katerine). In the same area, OE *flæh* may have survived; the variants in Sawales Warde 157 (Wilson) *fæhe blisse* R. T., *false*—B. suggest a reading *flæh*.

239. *leærig*: ‘passing the *laerig* of the shield’. *Laerig* occurs only here and in B/Mald 284, *bordes laerig*. These two occurrences illustrate the fragmentary nature of our knowledge of the heroic alliterative tradition; but also their witness, so widely separated in time, is practically decisive on the form, *lærig*. In my opinion, it can be derived from Lat. *lorica*, through late British or early Welsh (before AD 700). *Lorica* is formed from *lōrum* ‘thong’, and meant a cuirass of plaited leather thongs; but it was already in classical Latin applied to various other protections: a breastwork, parapet, fence or hedge, or any outer protective covering. The sense ‘protective border’ would fit the two verse passages and could also apply to the only other occurrence, the Aldhelm gloss *ambiantur: syn emblægide*, referring to borders of sleeves (A. S. Napier, *Anecdota Oxoniensia* (1900), 8, 377). But the phonology of this borrowing has seemed too difficult, for the Welsh form is *llurig*. Yet *llurig* is a semi-learned form, with [ɔ] of *lorica* restored at some stage; cf. *Dunawt* > *Dônátus*. The normal development in popular and colloquial Latin would have been *lorica* > Brit. *lorig*. Unrounding of pretonic [ɔ] > [s] can be postulated in some cases: e.g. Lat. *corrigia* > mid Welsh *carri* ‘thong’. Brit. *lærig* would produce (either before i-affection, or at an early stage of this change) a suitable base for *leærig*; cf. *latina* > OE *leæden*. This view differs entirely from that of M. Förster, *Keltisches Wortgut in Englischen* (1921), p. 171.

*lícwunda swor*: there is little doubt that *swor* is an error for *spor*; cf. *purh swæþnes* *spor*, *Jud* 623, *leæad (swæþnes) spor*, *ivron ecgheard ead(e)l* dorgead *secoras*, *An. 1180* (the emendation is confirmed by metre and alliteration). But in these two examples the phrase means ‘weapon’; *lícwunda spor* refers to wounds. An original image *mark/trace of a weapon* became on the one hand a cliché, applied to the agent. Here, *spor* retains its sense, which is merely specialized by *lícwunda*, thus ‘body-wound mark’; the causal genitive *gyllpplægan gæres* follows in elaborated form.

243. *wig curon*: *wig* needs completion, and could be emended *wigend*; for the metre cf. *Bowe* 1437b [Pope’s *Catalogue* A 98, six examples]. This fits better than a compound, since the choice concerns individuals, not groups.

244. *leæstan*: should be transitive, with *mod* as object. The sense ‘fulfil, make effective’ is attested for (ge)leæstan. *Wolde* is then another example of pret. pl. subj. without ending (cf. 124, 151, etc.).

245–6. Evidently a half-line is missing, either before or after garheames *feng*; *eac þon* may simply add a detail without change of construction (so 381, 545), or it may be followed by a new subject (so 374). I now prefer the
former, taking *eac pon magnes creft* as parallel with what precedes. The next statement then has the plural subject carried over from *lastan wolde*. Read *gretan* (or *gretton*) *set gude gaerbeames feng*. I take *gaerbeames feng* to mean ‘act of grasping/handling the spear-shaft’. For this range of sense in *gretan*, *cf. Beow* 1065, 2108 (of handling a harp), also *hilde gretton* 181.

281. *fus:* can be construed with genitive in *sides fus*, but is not so found with *forðweg*, which is always preceded by *on/in*. The obvious emendation is *fus on forðwegas*; *cf. fus on forðweg* 129, also *Gud* 801, 945.

*Fana* is generally assumed to refer to one of the pillars. But a *fana* is a flag or ensign, that flaps in the wind; *cf. MetB* 1.10. It accords with the verb *ridan*, which can be used to describe motion to and fro of something attached; *cf. ridan on gealgan* in *Beow* 2445 and *Fates* 33; *on ancre rad*, *Beow* 1883. It seems more probable that the poet is describing the scene largely in terms of contemporary military custom, with horn-signals and standards. As soon as the marshalling is finished, the banner is raised, to indicate that the host is ready for battle. *Fana up rad* does not scan. The emendation *gerad* is not acceptable, for *geridan* is normally transitive, and is so in the only occurrence in verse, *Beow* 2928. Read *uppe* ‘on high’.

249. *beama beorhtost*: if *fana* means ‘banner’, *beama* must be emended to *beacna*; *cf. Beow* 2776–7, *segn...beacna beorhtost*.

*buton:* generally taken to be an error for *bidon*. Again there is failure to recognize a dialect form, probably *biudon*.

250. *hwonne:* has the idiomatic sense ‘until’; *cf. 471–4 hwonne...come*. The construction is the same as that of *od* (*paet*): with indicative of achieved event (so 59, 204, 215); with subjunctive of event still in the future at the time thought of. I have not found another case of *hwonne* + indicative in verse: and *bræce* is here metrically impossible. The syntax is of some critical importance. For if the army waited until the *sidboda* did actually appear, it must have appeared before Moses sent out his *hildecalla*.

†*sidboda:* *boda* means ‘announcer, herald’; *cf. †nydoda* 474, *spelhodan* 513. This then is the herald to announce the time for the march. It is not necessarily the Pillar of Cloud. *Lyftedoras* is probably ‘borders of the sky’, i.e. the horizon; *edor* means both ‘fence (protection)’ and ‘fenced enclosure, a court’. The phrase should therefore mean ‘broke through the fences of the sky’, i.e. rose over the horizon into the open sky. Cf. ON *silar jaharr* ‘the court of the sun’ = heavens. These words are only strictly applicable to something bright appearing above the horizon.

[Tolkien’s argument that *sidboda...lyftedoras bræc* refers to sunrise is expanded in an excursus on the Pillars. The argument is unconvincing; he does not quite convince himself that 250–1 is an anticipation of the sunrise clearly described in 344–6. But some interesting points are made about the appearances of the Pillars and the terms used to describe them.]

The words of Scripture suggest, without making explicit, that the ‘pillar’ was a kind of moving column or tower in which the Lord himself was present; that it was always there before the Israelite host, and that it had two forms: a cloud by day, at night shining like fire (Exod. xiii.21–2). When
the Egyptians overtook Israel at the fourth camp, the ‘pillar’ changed positions, and went behind the Israelites to protect them; it gave both darkness and light, and prevented the armies seeing each other (Exod. xiv. 19-20). After that we hear no more of the ‘pillar’ as a guide; but it is said that the Lord looked upon the host of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and of cloud (Exod. xiv. 24).

In accordance with these passages, the poet represents columna by beam: beamas tween 93-4, byrnende beam 111 (note that fyrene beam is used in Ps 104.34, translating expandit nubem in protectionem eorum et ignem ut luceret eis per noctem). He says nothing of either pillar at the fourth camp, when an angel separates the hosts, 204-5. He never mentions the presence of God in Cloud or Fire. This is in keeping with his general treatment, in which God is seen only through the words and deeds of Moses. He regards the beamas as emblems of God’s protection and guidance; they performed his will (heahþegunga haliges gostes 96) and were actually controlled by an angel. But the poet attributes functions to the pillars not mentioned in the narrative of Exodus. The Cloud is a protection against the sun, and against the fierce heat of Africa. One reason for this is the association between Ethan and the people of Ethiopia in Ps. lxxiii.14, 15 (see note on 66). Another can be seen in Ps. civ.34 cited above. The Fire is represented (without scriptural authority) as guarding the camp and suppressing rebellion.

The poet describes these ‘pillars’ in terms that have little to do with columns. The Cloud is wedewolcen 75, wolcen 93; it is a net, a sail, a tent 74-85; perhaps, sidboda 250; finally, suildres beam 507. The Fire is byrnende beam 111; it is a foregenga with fyrene loccas, blæce beamas 120-1. The confusion here is compounded by naming it heofonbeacen 115; for this is a normal poetic term for the sun. The poet always thinks of the Cloud together with the sun: it absorbs the sun’s heat, ligfyre adranec 77; and itself gives light, heofontorht 78, lyftwundor leohht 90. I do not think that heofonbeacen astah 107 refers to the Cloud. By the rearrangement of 93-107, this phrase refers to sunrise, and is followed by scean scir werod, scylidas lichton 125. The Cloud is present, lifes laþpewo, segl 104-5; but it is not the signal for rising and starting.

252-98. Our poet has chosen to construct a passage which is mostly a harangue by Moses. It is based on the exhortation of Moses when the Egyptian pursuit became known (Exod. xiv.13, 14) and the following words of God to Moses (Exod. xiv.15-18), and a brief narrative verse (Exod. xiv. 21). He seems to have done this partly because he deliberately represents Moses as the hero of the Exodus and the Crossing—though he has at all points the aid of God, and acknowledges this. It is also part of the way the scriptural narrative shaped itself in his mind.

252. ḥildeccalla: evidently a military herald. The stem otherwise occurs in OE only in ceallian, BMald 91. I think there can be no doubt that c(e)allian was part of the OE verse vocabulary, even if it had fallen out of ordinary colloquial use (but cognates exist not only in ON, but also in OHG and MLG). Preservation in traditional verse-language of a word widely used in
another dialect or related language is a frequent event in linguistic history: e.g. ON gamall, the normal word for ‘old’, OE gamol in verse only, mostly in Beowulf; hrid ‘storm’, common in ON, in OE only in Wand 102.

253. beohata: one of the scribal falsehoods of this MS (like dryrymyde 40, meoringa 62). Bodhata (Bouterwek) still seems the best guess; boda exists as simplex, beside more usual gebod. The formation of compounds with agent-nouns of the weak declension was very common in OE; it can hardly be called ‘obscure’ (Krapp, 1931). The sense would be ‘announcer of orders/messages’. This is the man sent by Moses to call for silence; he lifts up his shield as a sign that he has a message.

255. gehyrdon: for -en subj., since penden introduces a clause of wish or purpose.

275. ofer: frequently used of the direction of the voice. The implication of reordigeon ofer is that the voice should reach the furthest rank.

264. moton: for -en subj., since an unrealized future is referred to.

265. aegnian: probably aegnian, variant of aegnian. The form does occur: in the Rushworth gloss to Lute xii.44 engad (sic), and aegnad in the Hatton MS of CP 334. 13 (v.l. aegnad); cf. Goth aeginon. The sense is probably ‘possess, lord it over’; cf. angedfrea ‘master (of a slave)’.

266. ne willad: I doubt now whether this is imperative; it seems rather to go with wilde 26r. Moses is being prophetic, and ironic: ‘To them all God today by my hand will give their deserts... You will not be afraid of dead troops...’.

269. ic on: Cosijn’s (1895) emendation ic on is obviously right. Cunnan reed ‘to have a plan or policy’ is an idiom that survives in ME. Unnan always governs the genitive, and its sense ‘yield, give up willingly’ is quite unsuitable.

275. bare: is not needed, and accus. hand shows that it is a false addition. In Anglian and so usually in verse mid takes accusative, but in WS usually instrumental/dative. Here there is an aside by the narrator, to mark the sudden change in tone and force of Moses’ utterance. The poet has delayed the actual miracle of the dividing of the waters for this moment. The OE tenses do not make for clarity in such situations; but the perfect tense is expressed by sloh 280, fornam 289, etc.

277. lifgendra peod: in the context, this must be Moses (especially in view of for hergum), therefore peod is an error. It could arise from confusion between +leod m. ‘prince’; +teoden m. ‘prince, king’; leod f. and peod f. ‘people, nation’. Probably peod represents an incomplete alteration from leod to peoden; which will not scan. If we read leod here, it will be necessary to alter leodum to leofum.

278. eagum to: it is best to omit to (so Bright). Separated on placed before the verb is quite sufficient; for a similar context, cf. 178–9.
280. *hu ic sylfa sloh*: virtually present, 'I have struck'. To define the time-reference of the simple past tense, *aer* is frequently used to indicate pluperfect. It might be expected that *nu* would be used to define the perfect, and this does occur quite often in verse: e.g. *Beow* 430, 2799, 3020; *Finsb* 21; *Cri* 83; *El* 1170; *Gen* 730; *Cr & S* 109, 391; *Ex* 295, 421. *Nu* used as a conjunction is frequent in correlative constructions: e.g. *Beow* 430. It seems almost certain that we should emend to *nu*, correlating with *nu* 278. For corruption of *nu* to *hu* in a correlative construction (in present tense) cf. *Ap* 88–91.

281. *grene tacne*: *grene* reveals that *tacne* is an error for *tane*. The poet may have been aware that *virga* (Exod. xiv.16) properly meant a green shoot or fresh-cut rod. *Tan* is also suitable because of its native magical associations: it was used in sortilege, cf. the gloss *tanhlytā*: ‘diviner’.

282. *weeter ond wealfasten*: *ond* should be omitted as an error caused by misunderstanding; for *weeter* is clearly parallel to *yd* (representative singular). *Wulfasten* occurs again in 483, and in *Gen* 1058, describing the first of all walled cities.

284. *hase*: the dun, dusty colour of well-trodden roads is meant. *Heresrest* = *herpeād*, the ordinary word for a military road, high-road. The long dry passage ran between the ominous ramparts out to sea, like a tramplad dusty military road.

*germynd*: to make a thing *rum* is to make it open, unrestricted, free of obstacles. ‘The sea is laid open to you, the old foundations’ is in effect ‘the old bottoms of the sea are laid open to passage.’

287–8. *ford hemon... pealton*: the whole passage *hu ic aer* 285—suecir span 291 will have to be treated as a narrative interpolation within the speech, unless *ford hemon* can be explained. The words in 287–8 cannot well be altered, except for *in ece*: *Kluge* was right to read *in ecyss* e, though *eg(ness) e* is better. The explanation must therefore lie in something other than textual corruption. The situation is exceptional: a poet is attempting to combine narrative (based on Scripture) with a feigned speech. After the statement that no human foot had before trodden the *elde stādolas, fage feldas* it might be expected that a narrator would explain why: because (in the past time referred to) they had always been deep under the waves. This would involve a backward, rather than a forward, prospect of eternity. Although eternity is normally represented as a forward prospect, the direction depends on the point of view. This poet is often bold, even strained in his use of language. He seems to be using the fixed expression *ford hemon* ‘reckoning on from now’ in the sense ‘from now back into eternity’.

289. *seld segrundas*: resumption of *elde stādolas, fage feldas*. *Sealan* means ‘to tie’, and is elsewhere used of anchors, bonds, fetters, etc. The sense ‘imprisoned’ is passable, but is made to fit the context. Otherwise we must emend, and assume intrusion of the vowel of a neighbouring word. If *aer* is caught from *segrundas, sīde* for *seld* is a possible suggestion (so *Cosijn*).
suðwind fornam: sund wind fornam (Cosijn²) is clearly right, and is reasonably related to Exod. xiv.21 abstulit illud (sc. mare) Dominus flante vento vehementi et urenre. Baedæges blest, in apposition, is equivalent to ‘blowing over the sea’.

290. brim is areofad: brim wæs gives the most plausible emendation, since the presence of wæn offers some explanation of the corruption.

291. span: I do not believe in spau = spaw. Spewing does not suit the context, which differs entirely from holm heolfre spaw 449 (where spewan has dative of the object, as usual). The picture here is of waters reared and moveless, like walls with their feet on the sand; and sund is the dry sea-floor (verit in siccum). It seems therefore that span is either spinnan III (BTS), similar in sense to spornan/spurnan; or an error for sparn/spern ‘trod, set foot on’, cf. sondlond gespærn, Gud 1334.

secir: an odd but not impossible spelling for secyrri/-cierr, non-WS-cerr. Wipercyr, El 925 apparently means ‘turning-back, way back’. The use of secerr ‘turning-back of the sea’ to mean ‘turned-back sea, rearing sea’ is not too bold for this poet. The phrase may of course be quite corrupt.

293. ærglade: the nearest parallel is ærgod 5 x in Beowulf, applied 2 x to a sword, 3 x to eþpeling. The sense is fairly certainly ‘of ancient worth, long ago proved good’. Glaed meant originally ‘bright’. This sense still occurs in several places in OE verse; but its normal development was ‘bright of mood, merry’, weakening to ‘cheerful, good-tempered, gracious’ (this development was shared by ON). Another natural development would be ‘splendid, glorious’. This sense is rare, hardly ever applied to persons; but it seems the most likely interpretation of glæde Scyldingas, Beow 58. On this interpretation, Moses is reproaching the Israelites for lack of faith. Of old God showed them his mercy, and they were glorious; so they should accept this miracle as a sign of his favour.

296. randgeboð: ‘marginal protection’, i.e. a rampart along the borders of the road. See note on randbyrig 463.

305. The end of this line is lost, by another of the tiresome omissions of this MS. It contained the subject of heold, probably the sea (feðmas 504 is used of the sea). Kluge’s ñwylce him ða weall is the best and most idiomatic of the proposed fillings.

308–9. Here the central difficulty is læste nær. In relation to this are the certainties that leofes leop must refer to Moses’ speech, whereas sweg and sauces bland must refer to the clamour of the host. To make all three the subject of swidrode is stylistically improbable. It seems that a verb connected with leofes leop is missing; something has probably been omitted after nær. Lasti is usually taken to be a noun of action to the verb læstan, here meaning ‘performance’; but there seems to be no good evidence for such a word. læstgan is itself derived from læst/læst ‘track, footprint’ and hence ‘position behind’ of a follower or supporter. The sense ‘closer behind’ is entirely satisfactory, but it requires assumption of an omission. The comparative nær conveys a sense of motion; cf. ferede . . . olde niö, Gen
2089–91, near ætgongan, Az 183. Thus it is correct with a word meaning ‘footsteps’ but not with any word meaning ‘performance’. If after near we supply læstan ongannon leoda dugude, there is reason for the abnormal læst and a partial explanation of the lacuna. For these reasons, I think the poet wrote something of this sort: ‘They did not indeed contemn the exhortation of the holy one; when brave men close behind him began to carry out the beloved leader’s speech, all clamour ceased and the confusion of voices.’

309. sances bland: the collocation with sweg seems to show that sanger is meant. The error is probably not phonetic, but casual; part of the confusion in an illegible or carelessly copied passage. Sang need not refer to any formal song, and (as used of the cries of beasts, sound of horns, etc.) means here ‘upraised voices’. Bland only occurs elsewhere in the compound windblond, Beow 3146. Emendation to blan(n) is at first sight attractive, for blinman takes the genitive. But there is no suitable subject, and although blinman can be intransitive, it is not used impersonally.

310. peet feorde cyn: Judah was fourth in birth-order of the sons of Jacob (Gen. xxxv.23). The first, Reuben, was deposed because of his sin (Gen. xlix.3), and Judah’s primacy is mentioned (Gen. xlix.9, 10). The traditional reason for this placing is that Judah was ultimately the most important in the history of Salvation.

312. gnome grund: gnome was alliteratively linked with grund; cf. An. 776. For a figurative use, see gnome stræte, Cr & Sat 286.

313. an onorette: a verb is required, and it is likely to be onettan. Though the construction is rather unusual, I think we have here on separated from the noun it governs (uncud gelæd); an represents the stressed form of the displaced preposition, on is reduplication.

315. deop: frequent in the sense ‘profound, grave, solemn’; again in 506, and deop ærende 518.

318. cnewswmaga blæd: ‘the glory (chief ornament) of his kinsmen’. The cynericu refers to the realms to be gained by the Children of Israel.

319. heafdon him: the lack of expressed subject is good OE, if we treat 310–30 as an unbroken whole. The sectional division (xlvii) is here again unsuitable.

323. be pam: idiomatic for ‘by which sign or token’; cf. BMald 9. Herewisa occurs only here and Beow 3020 (of Beowulf himself). It could refer to the lion-standard (so Cosijn?); but the use of be would not be natural. So herewisau means the captains of the army; read be pam (pet) . . . wolden (~on for ~en~e subj.) ‘in token that the captains would not . . .’. 324. be him lifsgendum: ‘as long as life was theirs’; cf. Beow 2665.

326. prævæ: plainly an error for prævæ.

327. hægsteald modig: hagu-/~hægsteald is an ancient word meaning unmarried man, one still in the service of a superior. It was not originally
a consonant stem (cf. ON runic hagustaldr); the expected plural *hægstealdas occurs in *Finnb 40. But possibly it also developed a consonantal declension, by the influence of words in the same area of meaning: *hælsp, and especially participial nouns such as *wigend. The two occurrences of g. pl. *hægstealdra in verse (Gen 1862, Beow 1889) support this view, which would imply n. acc. pl. *hægsteald. Alternatively, *hægsteald, *wigend 328 and *bilswæðu 329 could all be representative singular, with scribal alteration of the adjectives.

328. *waepna *waeldlithes: depends on *modig.

329. *bilswæðu: *swaðu f. is far commoner than *swæð m., which does not otherwise occur in compounds; *bilsweðu *blodig is thus a probable emendation.

333. *sæwicingas: one of the earliest examples of OE *wicing ‘sea-rover’. The form shows that it was a native word, cognate with ON *vikingsr. Wicingas occurs as a tribal name in *Wids 47, and again in a similar North Sea context with *Wen(d)lum ond *Waernum, *Wids 59.

334. *angetrum: probably *ān-, though it is not clear whether the sense is ‘united’ or ‘singular, distinguished’. For *ān ‘unique, pre-eminently distinguished’, cf. *an *foran *ealcgystreona, Beow 1458 and *heafoc *wees *an *cyning, Beow 1885.

338. *odhpah: *pāh has replaced the correct preterite *pēah, non-WS *pāh. Since *pihcgan had developed a pret. *pihde in IWS, the old poetic form could be confused with the variants *pāh/þēah to the preterite of *pēon ‘thrive’.


340. An alliterating word has fallen out, a verb agreeing with *sunu sg. Read for *peor after him, or better, for *peor him *aefter. Comon then goes with *beodmegan, which is plural in sense.

341–3. *swetum *comon ... *garfare: all this should be taken as a parenthesis, making *sunu subject of *onprang.

344. *deawig *scaftum: to be read as a compound, ‘with spears bedewed’, showing an archaic practice of joining uninflected adjective to its noun; cf. *ealdhtlaforðes, Beow 2778, ealdgestreona, Beow 1458, under *heahrodore, Gen 151. *Deawig alludes to the night-damp associated with the chill early light, and so prepares for the vision of the rising sun.


*maguen *forð *gewat: a concluding phrase. The poet next constructs a link with what he has in mind to tell of the ancestry of Israel, and the foundation of their right to the Promised Land.
348. an: in view of *py he mære weard*, this can only be Moses or Judah = the tribe of Judah. Judah is almost certainly the meaning: and though this may seem repetitive, and unnecessary, after 314–18, that is no argument against it. This poet is repetitive, and often loops back again to something already said. The approach of Egypt and the fear of the Israelites is first described in 156 ff. After a now defective interlude, it is described at a slightly later point 168 ff.; and lastly at 202 ff. The position at 314–18 is that no one has yet ventured on the uncud gedæ. It was the tribe of Judah that did so. But in 347 ff. the picture has shifted. Judah is now far ahead on the road; Reuben and Simeon are also on the way; the sun has risen, and quickly host after host is marching away.

350. *after wolcnum*: this has no meaning without emendation. *After wolcne* is possible, if we imagine that the Cloud was still before the host. If the phrase is parallel to *cynn after cymne*, idiom demands *after oðrum* or *after folce*. It may be best to transpose the half-lines, and read *folc after folcum on fardwegas*.

351 ff. *cynn after cymne*: an ingenious link to matter that the poet thinks important, even though the modern reader may not. Each *cynn* knew its rights and privileges and place; these they derived from their common father Abraham (cf. Gen. xv.18). Allusions to the high lineage of the Israelites have been put in before (18, 273–4). Now in the hour of supreme miracle and final escape the matter of Noah, Abraham, and the Promise is inserted. The liturgical origin of this excursus seems to have been overlooked. [Tolkien remarks, in discussing the structure of the poem, ‘if this has been noted before, I have missed it’. Yet he had probably seen (and forgotten) the article of J. W. Bright, ‘The relation of the Caedmonian *Exodus* to the Liturgy’, *MLN* xxvii (April 1912), 97–103. Later critics neglected this article, because of its slightly excessive claims.] A series of scriptural passages had been drawn up as *prophetiae*, special illustrations for the instruction of catechumens about to receive baptism. It was retained in full in the Roman Liturgy of Holy Saturday until the reform of 1953. There were twelve such Prophecies; the content of Prophecies ii and iii are the basis of Exod 362–446, except that the matter of Prophecy ii has been reduced. Prophecy i was the account of Creation (Gen. i–ii, 3). Prophecy ii covered the history of Noah, from the building of the Ark to the first sacrifice (Gen. v.32–viii.21). Prophecy iii recounted the temptation of Abraham, the release of Isaac, and the Promise (Gen. xxii. 1–19). Prophecy iv contained the drowning of the Egyptians (Exod. xiv, 24, 31 and xv.1–3). Prophecies ii to iv thus represent the sequence in our poem: Noah–Abraham and Isaac; the drowning of the Egyptians is being described when the text resumes after a lacuna between 445 and 446. Abbreviation of the matter of Prophecy ii is understandable, because this poet is interested in Noah only as the beginning of a family and a land-title. It is also understandable that the subject of the Passover is not treated in the poem, for this narrative (Exod. xii.1–11) is placed as Prophecy ix.

352. *maghurga*: probably means Israel as a group of kindreds, since the *riht* that Moses had declared to them was common to all the Chosen People.
Bead refers to the reaffirmation of the Promise, made by Moses as emissary of God (Exod. iv. 8, 17; xiii. 5). The Israelites needed this reminder of their destiny, which lay elsewhere, as a reason for departing from Egypt.

353. adeo: implies the possession both of 'nobility' and of inherited rights.

354. leodfruma: 'head of the people' (in a genealogical sense). This is the meaning of the word in Gen i 246, 2334; Beow 31 (of the founder Scyld).

358. orunhi: adjective, 'rightful, legitimate'; so An i 20. The Israelites were the 'true/legitimate' people of God.

359. orpancum: the basic sense is 'thinking things out'. Abstract nouns in the dative plural are often used adverbially, so the sense here is 'wisely'.

360. megburge: families considered historically, hence 'genealogies'; gefrunon 'enquired into, studied the history of'.

362. Ninæ flosdæ . . . : this is the beginning of a historical account. It is extremely abrupt, and we could fairly assume that a line or two has been dropped. But there is no question of interpolation here; the sequence of thought is clear, merely the joint seems stylistically defective. Ninæ probably means 'renewed', referring to the fact that God first separated the Seas and the Upper Waters from the Land; but he repented of this creation, and released the waters (Gen. vii.11), and so reproduced the ancient Chaos for a while.

364. dren floda: metre requires the emendation (Graz, 1894) drencefloda, which is demonstrated by Gen 1398. The formation is probably verbal, *drankin-. These nouns were sparingly preserved, and as independent words usually the form -en; so edwenden, -scerwen.

373. mismicelræ: this word does not occur, and the prefix mis- in OE retains the sense 'varying from normal, various' only in mislic (as in Goth. missaleiks and in other Germanic languages); all other uses show the semantic development 'aberrant, wrong'. Yet a comparative is needed to precede ponne. The formula geteled ri(m)e(s) elsewhere qualifies a numeral. No numeral is possible here, but ma would serve; cf. El 634, tua hund odde ma geteled rime. An emendation mislecrea ma would fill both requirements.

374. seeleoda: an interesting preservation of a West Midland form (so too An 500); cf. beodan 166.

374-6. seda gehwic: Noah was told to take food on board, but not seed (Gen. vi.21). The notion of preserving the grains cultivated by men is added to Scripture. For bryttian means 'scatter' as well as 'distribute, share out'; the sense 'enjoy' usually assigned here is not appropriate, for it applies only to the person who distributes gifts (as in the typical passage Dan 67:1).

379. Abrahames: the name is always written Abraham in verse, although the metre usually requires it to be disyllabic and scanned like HrodgarĮ-es]-e. The syncope was natural in OE conditions, but a few trisyllabic forms were retained: e.g. Da Abraham, Gen 1873, Abraham þa, Gen 1805, Abrahame, Gen 1785a. It is noteworthy that in the next line the author used the longer form on purpose: þæt is se Æbråham (Type C, although it could have been mistaken for A3).
380. *se him*: probably an alteration of normal *pe him*. Although it may not be original, *se him* is likely to be a genuine variety of relative connection: for *se/seo* as relative but agreeing with the antecedent, see Gen 21:10, Maxims I 37–8.

381. *naman niwan*: so Gen. xvii.5. The OE Genesis curiously omits all reference to the change of name.

383. *on wraece*: the word could be *wracu* f. ‘vengeance, punishment, affliction’ or *wraec* m. or n. ‘exile, banishment’, as in Deor 1, Dan 568 and compounds. The sense of the former is not appropriate here, but the latter could give the meaning ‘in a strange land’; cf. Gen. xii.1, xvii.3.

384. *geleædde*: corrected in the MS from *gelifde* (repeated from the preceding line).

*on seone beorh*: the form is caused by modernization of *io to eo*. The mount in question was Moriah, interpreted as *terra visionis* in Gen. xxii.2. It appears that students of Scripture associated Sion with their native *sieme! syn* f. ‘sight, vision’; cf. Syne beorh, Cri 875, 899. But other passages of Scripture would support the identification of Sion/Zion with Jerusalem.

390. *witan larum*: Gad, the seer of David, told him to make an altar on the threshing-floor of Ornan (1 Chron. xxii.18). On this site David commanded Solomon to build the Temple (1 Chron. xxii.6–19, 2 Chron. iii.1).

392. *alhn*: this impossible form is clearly an error for *alh* ‘sacred enclosure’. It occurs here and in the still further corrupted *heah haligne*, PP s 78.1; also in (e)alhstedas, Dan 673, 689, ealhstadas, An 1642.

398–9. Clearly there is an interjection in the manner of OE verse: *—adfyr onbран, fyrstferðobana*—while no *fy gra wes* belongs to Isaac preceding, ‘he was not any the nearer to death for that’ i.e. because of the upblaze of fire. The mention of the kindling of the pyre shows that the poet had a strange idea of the manner of sacrifice, shared by the poet of Genesis. In Gen. xxii.9, Abraham bound his son and laid him on the wood, preparing to slay him before he kindled the offering. But in Gen 2902–6 Isaac is placed on the burning pyre before he is slain: *Ongan ha ad hlادan, aelda wæccan and gefeterode fet and hondalbearn se sum, and ha on beel ahof Issaeg geongne, and ha æдре gegarapisweord be gehittum ...* We can therefore assume that the fire was thought of as one of the means of death, *ferðobana*. *Fyrst* would mean ‘foremost’ (in order, rank, but not time). Here it is no doubt a corruption, and a probable cause is the preceding *-fyr*. The best suggestion is *fus* (Klaeber, Archiv xxiii (1904), 146–9). *Fus* means ‘eager to go’, not ‘eager’ = ‘greedy’. But fire is naturally eager to escape and become wildfire; also it is especially associated with *fege* in OE verse.

Brut. Tiber with $b$ is an archaism: $5 \times$ in Genesis, $2 \times$ in Exodus. In other verse it is spelt with $f$ $4 \times$. The archaic spelling seems to indicate that the word was no longer current.

404. da he swa ford gebad: ‘and so it was that thenceforth he experienced ...’. Hiht here means joy, not hope.

405. leodum to lafe: clearly for lare, through the influence of yrfe lafe and the similarity of $f$ and $r$; Abraham’s action was an encouraging example.

408. ecc: not a mere repetition, for it refers to the drawn blade. Grymetian is applied to persons gnashing their teeth, to animals, and to the sea. It does not primarily describe a noise, but produces an emotional effect of menace.

409. lifdagas ... wisse: a variant of the usual impersonal him leoфрan ne tæwen. Wisse used with predicative accusative has the sense ‘regarded, felt’; cf. witan ege ‘to feel fear’. The lifdagas are Abraham’s, as the text stands: i.e. this is an elaboration of ‘life itself was not dearer than obedience’.

410. þonne: here governs a noun-clause expressing the thing compared to lifdagas; cf. An 1088–90.

411. up arende se eorl, wolde slean eafseran sinne: this would make a tolerable hypermetric verse, with rearrangement of the first half to se eorl up arende.

412. eagum reodon: eagum is clearly an error for ecgum, which is often used in the plural because most varieties of sword were two-edged. Reodon infin. ‘to reddan’ is supported by ON rjóda and occurs elsewhere: deadwong rudon, An 1003; onræd, Gen 2932 is probably for onread; cf. Corpus Glossary 1129 onreod; imbuit.

413. god: clearly substituted for an alliterating synonym. The scansion of lète (~) requires preceding ~ or -, obviously metód.

416. styran cwom: the infinitive expresses concomitant action, as usually with verbs of motion; ‘a voice came bidding him stay’.

418-45. God is throughout referred to in the third person, although no Angel or messenger has been mentioned. This passage combines two speeches of the Angel (Gen. xxii.11–18), and the intervening matter—the discovery of the ram, and the sacrifice—is entirely omitted. The poet was mainly interested in the Promise and the title to the land of Canaan.

421. waldend: emend to waldende. Though the participial agent-nouns usually have an endingless dative, waldend has -e in OE verse; so Beow 2329b.

422. freoðo: the form shows confusion of two distinct words which are nearly synonymous: friod|friød f. ‘love, friendship, goodwill’ and friðu (friðu|a, friðu|a) m. ‘peace, protection, security’. Both occur in verse only. Additionally there is frið m., synonymous with friðu, representing a variant of this u-declension noun transferred to the normal masculine declension. Here the metre requires a long stem, and idiomatically it must
be genitive plural governed by _lengest_. _Freoðo_ is thus an error for _freoda_; ‘which shall prove for you, while your life lasts, the longest-enduring friendship’.

426. _behteylfan_: ‘to cover with a vault’ is strictly applicable to _heofon_. Possibly _on eordan_ was altered because the cliché _heofon ond eordan_ was expected.

427. _widdra and sid dra_: these forms must be wrong, since no masculine noun is concerned. _Widran|sidran_ would agree with _word_ pl. But _widdre|sid dre_ is no very rash emendation, giving the comparative adverbs.

430. _gin_: from the same base as _ginan, ginian, gônian_ ‘yawn, open wide, gape’; ‘gulf’ seems the best equivalent here. _Geomor_ is a term suitable to the clouds of northern tradition, not very apt here.

431. _ne_: error for _he_, as _hu_ for _nu_ 280.

435. _cunmon_: probably stands for _cunmen_ subj. ‘will be able’, since _nympe_ . . . _weorde_ is in effect future of _nympe sic_ ‘unless someone proves so wise’.

436. _ylde_: for _ylde_ ‘men’. The nominative plural is very rare, and the word occurs most often in the g. pl. _ylda_.

441. _sund_: clearly an error for _sand_. The source is Gen. xviii.17, _sicut stellas caeli, et velut arenam quae est in littore maris_; the idea of numbering comes from Gen. xv.5, _suscipe caelum, et numera stellas si potes_ . . . _sic erit semen tuum_.

442 ff. _be seem tweonum_: an ancient formula, probably devised originally with reference to the ‘Cimbric peninsula’, modern Denmark. In _Beowulf_ it is used _3 x_, each time referring to the ancient North: cf. especially _be seem tweonum_ . . . _on Scedenigge_ 1685–6. The formula of course implied ‘in the known world’. Here the poet seems to use the phrase with a particular geographical reference. The bounds of the Promised Land are given in Exod. xxiii.31, _ponam autem terminus tuos a Mari Rubro usque ad Mare Palestinorum_; Gen. xv.18, a _fluvio Aegypti usque ad fluvium magnum Euphraten_, which is rendered with expansion in Gen 2304–15; Gen. xviii.8, _onem terram Chanaan_, cf. also Ps. lxxii.8, _in Salomonem et dominabitur a mari usque ad mare_, rendered _be seem tweonum_, _PPs_ 71.8.

443. _egipte_: probably an error for _egipta_ g. pl.; cf. _weorde_ 8. Names of lands are generally so expressed in OE. _Ingemone_ is morphologically impossible; there can be no serious doubt that the true reading is _Egippta ingepeode_; cf. _PPs_ 112.4, _ofar eolle ingepeode: super omnes gentes_. Similarly, _ingefolc_ 142, _ingemen_ 190.

Excursus on the lacuna: at this point the MS has two blank sides (pp. 164, 165). Between them a leaf has been excised. The text resumes on p. 166, headed by the section number xlviii. These divisions of course do not derive from the poet; but the omission of one here certainly suggests that something once written by the scribe is lost. Section xlvii covers pp. 160–3
(128 verse lines). Section xlviii is missing, and more may have been lost than can be deduced from the present state of the MS. It is possible that the exemplar used by this scribe was defective, and that he left space which he hoped later to be able to fill. The end of the poem is clearly defective; p. 171 has only 93\frac{1}{2} lines, and the writing ends in the middle of a word.

As to the content: the narrative is broken off as Israel marched away over the sea-paths (l. 351, corresponding roughly to Exod. xiv.22). Here the poet slides with skill into a brief link-passage, introducing the ideas of descent and of land-title. The entry of Noah (362) is sudden, but it is probably to be explained by the order of the Prophecies (see above, on 351 ff.). After Noah (Prophecy ii) and the Temptation of Abraham (Prophecy iii), we can expect the matter of Prophecy iv in the lacuna. This Prophecy contains Exod. xiv.24-xv.1; the narrative basis of the rest of the poem, which ends with section xlviii. When the text resumes on p. 166 (l. 446), the narrative is more or less in the middle of Exod. xiv.25, describing the panic of the Egyptians.

At l. 445 the poet successfully concludes a well-arranged example of the OE rhetorical style. The whole speech of the 'divine voice', 418-45, is very well constructed. It shows indeed the over-emphasis and purely verbal enrichment which is part of this style. Alliterative verse was a difficult medium; it is not easy to work in simple terms like 'stars' and 'sand' without expansion. After this conclusion, the poet could return to his main narrative theme. At 446, he is describing a scene of vast and terrible confusion. Now for 57 lines he gives way to excess. There are fine evocative phrases, but most is a confusion of emphasis without climax. It is even hard to make out that two processes are concerned: the disabling of the Egyptian chariots and the ensuing panic (Exod. xiv.24-5), and the moment when Moses released the seas (Exod. xiv.27). The poet in fact anticipates the climax before it is reached (see below on 455-8). Difficulties in interpreting Scripture may explain some elements in the poet's treatment of this scene; but they do not alter the actual faults in the ordering and expression of his account.

448. hweop: hwopan seems to imply sound as well as menace (see on 121). The poet is evidently heightening the picture by representing the Sea as a raging monster only precariously restrained; cf. 458, 474, 477 (again hweop), 489.

beorhhlidu: beorg is used of sea-shores, even when not particularly steep or rocky. The term can hardly be applied to the water-walls, not even by our poet in his frenzy. We must suppose that he imagines the water already closed behind the Israelites, with the swirl flinging up the blood of the Egyptians, slain in the wreck of their chariots, upon the west shore. Besteman occurs 8 x in verse, 7 x with biode.

449. heolfre spaw: the use of instrumental rather than accusative of direct object, especially with verbs meaning to wield or cast, was probably a feature of ancient Germanic syntax (it was normal in ON prose). It survived in OE chiefly in verse, where it was already perhaps obsolescent: (ge)bregdan in the sense 'draw, pull suddenly' is more often followed by accusative than
by dative/instrumental in Beowulf; though in most cases the instrumental could be replaced without metrical obstacle.

450. waelmist: mist is the stem of bestemed. The spray of the angry sea filled the air, but it was red with blood.

451-4. Represents Exod. xiv.25, Dixerunt ergo Ēgyptiī: fugiamus Israelum; Dominus enim pugnat pro eis contra nos.

452. forhtigende: since this is unmetrical, the original probably had forhtende. The alternation in this class of verbs between -ende after long stem and -iende after short stem was probably not a simple phonetic development. The archaic type of participle was preserved where the long form would be clumsy; a number of these short participial forms are still found in VPs. The -iend form was ultimately generalized in the West Midland dialect, as ME shows.

454. gylp weard guornra: characteristic oxymoron.

455. atol: specifically applied to monsters (so Beowulf 7 x ) and hostile inhuman things; it is used of the sea in Beow 848.

455b-8. ne deer eenig . . . wes adrenced: here is the poet’s greatest blunder; unable to hold back for the climactic crash (463–6), he states the outcome in the midst of the process. Reflections on the fate of the Egyptians recur in the proper place, 508–14.

456. beleac: the verb is transitive, so hie has probably been dropped after ac.


459. streamas stodou: this connects in meaning with 454b–455a (before the unfortunate anticipation of the outcome). An inceptive sense ‘mounted’ is possible, though ‘stood there threatening’ is more in accordance with OE usage.

storm: in spite of the context, this does not refer to wind or tempest. It means ‘a great shout’, cf. storm upp aras . . . cyrm unlītel, An 1236, and styrmman ‘shout’. The basic sense ‘disturbance’ developed the separate meanings ‘clamour’ and ‘tumultuous weather’.


462. Flod blod gewod: the noisy exaggeration is a specimen in little of the faulty handling of this scene. Presumably blod is the subject. We need not increase the fault by translating gewod as ‘pervaded’, which would indeed have required an intolerable deal of gore. When the verb is transitive, it means simply ‘enter into’.
463. randbyrig: occurs elsewhere only in jul 19, rundburgum weold, where the relevance of the term is not clear. Randgebeorh 296 must also be connected. The Gmc. stem rand- gives a masculine noun except ON rýndr. It had two senses: ‘border, rim, margin, (marginal) strip’; and ‘shield’ or some part of a shield. Possibly two words of different origin have coalesced in form while retaining some divergent meanings; but convincing etymologies are not to be found. The sense ‘shield’ is confined to poetry in OE, where rand is one of the most frequent synonyms, and ON rónd means ‘shield’ in poetry only [apart from a few prose idioms for ‘to do battle’]. The sense ‘border etc.’ was part of the ordinary vocabulary in Scandinavia, Holland, and Germany; we can assume this for OE also, for it appears in charters [see English Place-Name Elements by A. H. Smith (English Place-Name Society, vols. xxv, xxvi, 1956), vol. ii, s.v. rand], it occurs in ME poetry, and is widespread in modern dialects in such senses as ‘border, selvedge, strip of cloth or leather, stripe, etc.’. This sense will explain randbyrig and randgebeorh; both represent a protection or bulwark (of water) on the margins of the dry road running between. (Rundburh, Jul 19 has no direct connection: it could be a variant of scyltruma and so ‘military force’, or a misunderstood variant of burh ‘stronghold’.) Randbyrig weorun rœfene means literally ‘the ramparts on either margin were broken’; this anticipates the climax of 483-4.

463-4. meredeadan meost: as the text stands, this is grammatically the subject. It seems we must accept the queer strained language, or abandon ródr... meost as incurably corrupt. The poet would be saying that after the bulwarks of water were broken ‘the greatest of sea-deaths lashed the very sky’ (i.e. the vast destroying sea flung high the spray of the fall). Swipode is metrically inadequate; *swíþpode would be better. There are traces of Gmc. stýp- in this group; cf. OS farwíþpan ‘drive, sweep away’, and mod. Engl. ‘swipe’.

465. cyre swoðrode: cyre ‘free-will, choice, personal decision’ could be interpreted in the sense ‘all choice, or chance of doing anything, came to an end”; cf. ON kositr ‘choice’ used of an alternative course of action.

466. ses: a normal prose synonym has been substituted for weges. The original reading may have been weges, with e interpreted as ð = ð.

wighord scinon is an interjection, producing with economy a picture of the glint of many shields of drowning men in the dark waters.

469. þneþ: this adjective evidently is the same as nep- in nepflod, gloss for a neap-tide: a tide which fails to come up to the shore, falls short. The etymology of OE ðneþ, mod. Engl. ‘neap’ is obscure. The stem cannot have mutation of [ð], since adjectives with a long mutated stem all show uninflected ending [-i] in W.Gmc.; ðneþ must therefore reflect Gmc. [ë], or more probably [âe], WS æe.

470. seeorun asealed: almost exactly ‘cleverly caught’. Searu applies to anything skilfully contrived: nets, traps, war-gear, or ornaments. For instrumental plural in this sense, cf. earmbeaga fela seeorum gesealed, Beow 2764.
barenodon: error for bas(e)nodon, by confusion of r and s; basnian is derived from *bāsn, related to hōdan as wrān is to wrīdan.

471. fyrde: error for wyrde. This sentence is a good example of hwonne used as indirect interrogative with the subjunctive.

473. †relastum: †e- is the phonologically correct form of the stressed prefix which becomes of as unstressed preposition/prefix. Of tended to drive out †e-, which survived only in a few, mostly rare and archaic words. Gewuna is normally ‘accustomed to’; but etymologically the earlier meaning was probably ‘being contented to’, and here it seems practically ‘patient of’.

474. nacod nydhoda: aother item of strained language. It recalls nacod niðdracca of Beow. 2273. Nacod can be applied to drawn swords (Beow. 539, 2585), and to things savage and inhuman, as to the dragon. Nyd- in all extant compounds is never the object of the verb implied but its cause or attendant circumstance; nið- would be more appropriate: niðboda, ‘threatener of bitter enmity’.

475. †fedegast: †fedegest ‘stranger that comes walking’ occurs in Beowulf and Elene. The words gast|gast and gast|giest|gyst are much confused in MSS; but gast must be correct here.

475 ff. There are perplexing difficulties. The succession of three rhyming strong-verb forms geneop, hweop, sweop may well conceal some error by assimilation. †Geneop is apparently a verb of class 7, which should have [ʊ] or [ɛː] in the present stem. Its contextual sense is ‘seized/overwhelmed’ or ‘hedged in/pressed’ (a semantic range seen in nierwan). It could be related to necp 469, by a similar connection between ‘cramped, limited’ and ‘confine, oppress’. But the form is hard to interpret, unless *genēp (infin. *genēpan) has been miswritten by influence of en in the preceding word. Peondum datv. is unsuitable as object of a verb of this sort. Emendation to gehneop (connecting with †ehneop ‘plucked’, Gud 847) is to be rejected for the same reason, as well as inanpness of sense. As it stands, sid appears to be the object of hweop; but hweopan in all other occurrences takes the dative of the person threatened (shouted at), and the instrumental of the means or mode of threat. If geneop is a word of the semantic area assumed it should have a direct object in the accusative. Observing that geneop seems to have the dative object proper to hweop, and hweop the accusative to be expected after geneop, we might consider it possible that the scribe had changed their places. The interpretation would then run: ‘until the naked boder of hate should come back seeking its everlasting foundations, a hostile oncoming demon which roared (hweop) threats against its enemies. The blue air was mingled with a bloody spray; the wild sea, about to burst its bonds, with terror of slaughter stopped (geneop) the passage of the men through the sea...’.

479. mod gerynde: the sense ‘let loose its fury’ is particularly apt in the context. The only difficulty is that (ge)ryman is normally construed with accusative of the obstacle removed, and dative of the person for whom it is
done. It is possible to read mode here; and the verb can be used without direct object.

480. wædle: ‘ranged’, as of a hunter or ravening beast. Wædan occurs in prose, and three times more in verse; only in MetB does it retain the basic sense of hunting, wædan mid hundum 19.15.

480-4. All in the same staccato style especially favoured for description of violent and exciting action. Such passages frequently slide off into a comparatively long sentence. So here, 484b-489; ūða probably begins a new sentence, but it might be attached to what precedes.

486. wærbeamæs: must be more or less parallel to viance þeode, object of slæh. It cannot be a kenning for ‘man’, since the identification (wer) must not be included in a periphrasis of this kind. It is metrically defective, and wærge bœrnæs (G-K 782) is a possible solution. Wērīg in its sense ‘wretched and accursed’ is very suitable; ealdweرغe 50 is applied to the Egyptians (this meaning arises by coalescence of two separate words: wērīg (OS wērīg), and wērge/wērga ‘outlawed, accursed person’). This emendation is the least objectionable suggestion. We have seen before that this scribe was capable of writing down ‘words’ that he did not understand: on bogum brun yppinges 498 is a striking example. These old poems contained much that was crabbed, dark, and antiquated. The knowledge that might have detected obvious errors in the still available copies was lost, or fast fading.

487. pad: certainly an error. The spelling at once excites suspicion, for pæd is, in verse at least, the invariable singular. Further, it is a physical word, and cannot be used for the act of moving. I suggest wæd, a noun in OE only used in verse. [Tolkien does not discuss the grammatical difficulty of wæd f. acc. sg. without -e; but according to Sievers-Brunner, § 252 ann. 2, the form without ending in these stems is found in datv. sg. and particularly acc. sg. in L, Rit, R², and occasionally in R¹.] This was an ancient word meaning ‘hunting’. The sense is ‘ranging abroad (especially in wild lands)’ 9 x; the exception is MetB 27.13, egestic hunta a bid on wæde (of the Devil). Helpendra is odd. But if we retain the reading these must be the waves, regarded as allies of Israel, since they were released by Moses to complete the destruction of the retreating Egyptians.

491. weollon welbenna: though weollan is etymologically related to weill(e); weill(e), the verb was mainly used of large heaving movements (of liquids), associated with heat and wrath; but weollan up was used of the rising of rivers. It thus might seem too large and violent a word to apply to wounds. But in this poem, in this place, the exaggeration is probably genuine.

witrod: clearly a corrupt or defectively-written word. Widertrod (Napier; see Sisam, MLN xxxii (1917), 48) is likely; cf. gewat him Abraham da . . . widertrod seom ladra manna, Gen 20:8-5, describing Abraham’s assault on the rear of retreating forces (Gen. xiv.13-16). The waters fell down on the retreat of the Egyptians.

492. handswære Godes: the dry road could be so regarded, and this must be the object of gefeal. But the release of the restrained waters is the immediate work of God, and reference to the sea is more likely.
493. *flod wearde sloh: *flod is subject, *wearde must be (or conceal) a suitable object for the rising water to strike. If *wearde is genuine, it would mean the rearguard of the Egyptians, or possibly the *cordor about the king. Otherwise, *werod is possible.

494. *unhleowan weeg: *hleow means ‘shelter’ or ‘protection’; (ge) hleow adj. means ‘sheltered’. In one branch of meaning the sense ‘warm (not exposed)’ was developed; this especially in the adverb and derived verb. But a wave is not ‘unsheltered’, and this would be a roundabout way of saying that it was chill. The Egyptians are now unprotected, and in this context they are being struck with the *famigbosma *flod as with a sword. What then is *weeg? It can be a verb, parallel to *sloh. The cognate of ON vega would be *vegan ‘slay’; this verb is traceable in forwegen, BMald 228, and in gewegan, Beow 2400 ‘fight’ (reciprocal). It would be a product of coalescence between *wigan (stem *wih-/*wuh-) ‘fight, kill’ and *vegan (stem *weg-) ‘move’. If *weeg is preterite of this verb, it would have the sense ‘strike’ rather than perfective ‘slay’.

*alde: this appears to be a ‘Homeritic’ epithet for a sword. It is not contextually apt, apart from allusion to legendary excellence and sharpness.

498–9. on bogum brun yppinge is nonsense. Brun can readily be corrected to *brim, and Sedgefield’s suggestion *yrringa should be accepted. Modswega (Grein) *maest is the subject. The usual explanation of on bogum as onbugon supplies a verb; but this does not scan. The verb must then be missing (accidentally, or because it was illegible). I would emend *bogum to *bosum; an association between *brim and *bosum is seen in of brimes bosme, An 444. The missing verb should contain g and end in m; its sense should be ‘seize, take’. Genom fits these requirements.

500. da þe gedrecte: deaþe gedreecte (Sedgefield) should be accepted; cf. deade gedreuced 34. The subject is still modswega *maest.

502. siddun gestah: an alliterating word is missing. Grund is possible; cf. Exod. xv.5 descenderunt in profundum quasi lapis. Geonon may be preferable (accounting for the corrupt on feond for onfond); it would be subject of gestah, ‘when the sea mounted’.

504. murn: should not alliterate in preference to the following noun. Heoru was freely used in compounds, and heoruferðum (Kluge) is a satisfactory emendation.

hilde gesceadan: cf. El 149 hild wes gesceadan ‘the battle was decided, effectively ended’. Lat. decido and Ger. entscheiden are semantically similar.

506. deop: ‘solemn, grave’. Word-play is probably not intended, for the literal meaning of fixed expressions is easily forgotten.

508. ungrundes: an adjective *ungrund is morphologically unlikely; the correct form ungrynede in RhP 49 may mean ‘bottomless’, but this is not applicable to an army. Since in writing grun and grim are sometimes hard to distinguish, ungerimdes is a plausible emendation. This word will not fit the metre, but the older adjective unerime can be substituted.
513. Again a word is missing. The real difficulty is se de sped ahte; the spelboda did not in this case have success. The missing word may be spilde (Grein) ‘destroyed’; for linking of spild and sped, cf. 153. Alternatively, stoylœ would suffice.

514. agewat: nowhere else used quite like this. But ‘poured away’ is an intelligible and forceful expression. Hie wæd God swemon is a forcible concluding phrase; cf. Beow 113 (of the giants).

515. Here is a real division in the matter; panon ‘then, next (turning from that)’.

516. merehwærf: hweardr ‘shore’ is appropriate, although it occurs only in prose.

518. nemnad: a plural verb is wrong here, and a present tense is totally out of place. The obvious reading is degweorc ne mad; for the meiosis in ne midon, cf. El 28, 1099 and Gud 1345. Moses ‘did not keep silent about’, i.e. he recalled in detail the things done that day.

519-47. The words degweorc ne mad have no reference to any subsequent events (which are reserved for 554-64). In fact they represent or refer to the Canticle of Exod. xv. This however does not get rid of all the strange features of this passage. For the Canticle and the answering canticle of the women and Miriam is again referred to at the end of the poem as we have it, and it is there a song. Here Moses preaches a sermon.

The Canticle does not contain any ece reed or exhortation, and is entirely occupied with praise of the Lord; except for Exod. xv.14-18, which foretells the conquest of Canaan. Moses is nowhere represented as haranguing the Israelites on or near the shore of the Red Sea, or as drawing any moral from the events. He did of course often exhort or rebuke them in all the troublous years that followed. These exhortations were no doubt in the poet’s mind. Thus he may regard his peculiar treatment of the end of his poem as a deliberate telescoping of Scripture. He wished to present a moral for his own people: to make his end answer his beginning. It is plain that he has in mind all the speeches of Moses, or of God through him, during the Wanderings.

It seems then that the poet deliberately and for dramatic effect represented Moses as making a speech on the shore, in the very hour of triumph, which is not recorded in Scripture. He represented the oration as including matter of universal moral and spiritual value; covering the idea that the events of the actual narrative have also a value for all ages, as exhibitions of God’s mercy to Abraham’s people who are the spiritual ancestors of all the faithful. However, it is my feeling that the passage 519-47 does not come from the original poet. But it was incorporated long before our late WS copy was made.

522-3. lifes swealhested ... banhusas weard: both refer to the soul. Lifes is used in the Biblical sense: what is vivifying and soul-nourishing; cf. lifes word, Cri 1392, lifes snyttru, Gud 163. The ‘interpreter of life-giving knowledge’
refers to the intellective faculty of the soul. *Banhusse weard* is the conscience, governor of the whole incarnate person.

524. *ginfæsten*: represents either *ginfæste* wk. n. acc. sg., or -an pl.

525. *run*: contains three separate notions: (i) secrecy or privacy, cf. *runian* 'whisper, mutter'; (ii) wise advice, based on exceptional knowledge, cf. *runwita, geruna* 'confidant, counsellor'; (iii) writing which must be interpreted by special knowledge, cf. *Maxims I* 138, *Dan* 740b. Here all three are present; written Scripture if read and interpreted will yield counsel not available to the ignorant.

527. *meagollice*: *meagl* adj. is found occasionally in verse, and appears to mean 'vigorius, earnest'. The word is peculiar to OE, and without certain etymological connections.

52. *pheedscipes*: there are three different nouns of this form: (i) formed on *pheed* 'people'; (ii) 'connection, association'; (iii) 'instruction, discipline, law'. Etymological and semantic connections between (ii) and (iii) are obscure. Here the meaning is evidently 'instruction (what is taught and decreed)'.

530. *hoceras*: any learned men. Here the authors of the New Testament are primarily meant, though patristic writers are not excluded.

531. *lyftswymna*: evidently for *lifswymna* (cf. the reverse *lifsweg* for *lyft- 104*). *Lyft* is nowhere used of heaven (in any case thought of as above the 'air'). This means that the New Testament promises enjoyment of a better and longer life than that on earth.

532. *swaemmum awyrged*: a vague phrase characteristic of the homiletic style, which occurs also in *Ceri* 1561 (of the wicked at Doomsday). The central meaning of *swaemm* appears to be 'stain', and hence 'blemish, defect; corruption, foul deed/word'. *Awyrged* is a derivative of *wyrg* 'accursed, outlawed person'. Possibly it is an error for *awyrded* 'injured, destroyed'; cf. *swandun awyrded*, *Beow* 1113. Association if these two words is supported by *weepnum awyrged*, *Rid* 29.17, where the emendation to *awyrded* has been suggested.

533. *umbid*: variant of *andbid 'waiting time'; cf. *ud* 903-4 *nes seo sund latu earnra gosta ne peet onbid long.*

534. *gyutycele*: continues the symbolism latent in *dream*. In this 'hall' man is not even at home to enjoy such mirth as there may be; he is a mere stranger far from his *cœl*. Since *eodelse* pl. is fixed by metre, *healdan* is an error for -*œd*. *Giehtan* 'crying, lamentation' is probably from a stem *guuk-*, one of the many derivatives of *gulgeulgauf* which gave words for cries of various kinds; OE *geac* is one.

538. *regunpeofas*: the old element *regn* < *rēgin* occurs only in this word and in *regunheard*, *Beow* 326; in both it is used as a mere intensitive. It is probably derived from the pl. of *rēgin- 'plan, order, decision': ON
regin, OS ragino (g. pl) giscapu denoting the gods, ruling powers of the world. The Gothic verb raginon ‘to rule’ shows the basic sense ‘order, arrange, settle’, as in OE regnan, bere(g)mian.

539.  \textit{eftwyrd: wyrd} basically meant ‘happening’, and so could be applied to the process of history, or one of its events, beyond human control. In christianized language it was used of the Flood \textit{Dei est meaer wyrd}, Gen 1 399; and of the end of the world in \textit{Blicings Homilies 108. 32. Eft} has two senses: (i) ‘afterwards, next’ (of sequence in time); (ii) ‘backwards, again’ (implying return, restoration, or reform). All compounds belong to (ii), where \textit{eft} tended to replace the old prefix \textit{ed-}: so edlean/eftlean, edniweong/eftniweong; edscæft, Dan 112 (the new order after the end of the world) is especially relevant. So \textit{eftwyrd} probably refers to the end of the world, the whole drama of which the Judgement was the final act.

540.  \textit{meagienþrymmæ mast: þrymm} is loosely used of anything tremendous. Its connotations seem to include both sound and size; so here of a commotion accompanied by awe-inspiring sounds. \textit{Ofer + acc.} is often used in a local sense ‘over the extent of, upon’. Therefore the whole assembly for the Judgement is probably intended; angels, devils, and mankind.

541.  \textit{fah:} the sense is here active, ‘inimical’. Doomsday is ‘inimical to deeds’ because all will then be scrutinized unmercifully.

545.  A verb is missing, and it must be \textit{bid}, which is used specifically in a consuetudinal or future sense.

548–52. \textit{swa . . . spræc:} an extended introduction to an oration, enlarged by an interjection describing the audience. For the same pattern, on a smaller scale, cf. \textit{Beow 1698–9}.

551f.  Is \textit{witiodes} a noun (or adjective used as such), or is it an adjective agreeing with \textit{willan}? \textit{Bidan} is followed by the genitive when it means ‘expect, await something that has not yet happened’, by accusative in the sense ‘experience’. It is unlikely that it should have both constructions. If then \textit{witiodes} is an adjective, \textit{willan} is the genitive object of \textit{bad}; \textit{mũðhel} will in that case be object of \textit{ongeton}. If \textit{witiodes} is used as a noun parallel to \textit{modiges}, then both \textit{willan} and \textit{mũðhel} \textit{am} be objects of \textit{bad} ‘attended to’, and \textit{wundor ongeton} is an interjection. Gmc. \textit{*wito-/*wipt-} was a participial adjective frequently used as a noun, ‘ordinance, decree’. If \textit{wito} is here a noun, it must have personal reference, yet it is very unlikely to refer to Moses as appointed leader. Other uses make it far more likely that \textit{wiod} is an adjective, and that \textit{wito wille} means much the same as \textit{wito wyrd 471:} the decree or will of Fate (God). The host ‘waited on the destined purpose’ of the marvellous event they perceived, and in explanation they received the \textit{mũðhel} of their brave leader. \textit{Mũðhel} is odd, but it bears the stamp of this poet’s struggle for intensity through compression. In full, it refers to salvation proclaimed by the mouth of Moses, spokesman of God.

555. \textit{on Cananæa cyn:} \textit{on} takes the accusative, because the journey thither is thought of, rather than the situation of the \textit{burh}.
565–6. *segneas stodon on fægerne sweg: *segneas stodon is a parenthesis, on is produced by dittography, and fægerne sweg is object of swgon. Fægerne is metrically more probable that fæg-; according to Sievers, OE fæger shows the quantity â in the older verse, wherever the metre is decisive. [For fæger, see Sievers-Brunner, *Alteenglische Grammatik*, § 296 and ann. 2. The long stem is implicitly accepted by Pope and by Bliss for the collocation fæger foldbold, *Beow* 773, which occurs also in *DrR* 73; *As* 119 has fæger folde].


569. *gefeon:* does not parse or scan. It is apparently based on misunderstanding of the Anglian pret. pl. *gefegon*.

573. *wifforon:* † *wifforan* should have the sense ‘escape from’, parallel to *wüferian* trans. ‘rescue from’. An alliterating noun is missing after *pam*: *Herce* is usually supplied, but this is awkward, since *herepreatus* (the Israelites) follows immediately. Some word referring to the sea would be preferable; *holme* would do, and *pam* is possibly a false addition.

† *hreiddon:* synonymous with *hrêman* ‘exult’, formed from the same Gmc. stem *hra-.* An independent noun *hrépī-* survives only in OE *hred*, besides *hreðor, ON* *hroðr,* *hrêma-* *hrömi-* appears in OS *hrom*, OHG *hruom*, but in OE only in the derivatives *hremin* adj., *hreman* vb.

575. † *dægweorc:* a tautologous compound, which is likely to be an error for *dægweorc*, as in 315, 506, 518.

576–90. Here are some difficulties of a familiar kind (due probably to defective textual tradition), before the poem comes to an abrupt end.

576–8. *weras . . . wif on oðrum:* this cannot mean ‘the men on one side, the women on the other’, referring to the choir of women in Exod. xv. 20. OE idiom would require *ôðer . . . ôðer,* or the presence of some noun which *ôðer* represented without repeating. There is further evidence that something is missing. The usual emendation of *galan* to *golôn* produces a combination of noun + finite verb in the pattern *ôðer × ,* which is normally too heavy for the b-line; it has double alliteration in the a-line, e.g. *headoreaf heolidon,* *Beow* 401. An infinitive is more readily used in the second measure (especially one of the form *ô × ), completing a construction with *ongiman* or some other auxiliary: thus, *(ongan(n) . . . ) hearmleod galan, An 1127b, 1342b; (ongunnan . . . ) sérhleod galan, *DrR* 67b; (scealt) fútleod galan, *Cri* 623b. A possible re- construction of this passage would run: *weras wuldres sang, wif on(gunnon) oðrum (wordum), folcwesweta moest, fyrdleod galan.* Note that *oðrum wordum* would not necessarily imply different words, but would be legitimate OE for ‘corresponding words’, or ‘similar words in their turn’. Nevertheless, the corruption was probably more complex; the existing text can be regarded as an editorial effort to interpret a bad copy.

579. *acol:* a poetic word, which elsewhere means ‘filled with fear’. It seems an unsuitable term, in spite of Exod. xiv. 31 *timitque populus Dominum.* It is difficult to see how a great host singing *hlude stefne,* and a concourse of
women with clashing cymbals, were showing fear and awe. *Acol* and *acolmod* are elsewhere applied only to persons; *actum steinum* perhaps preserves an archaic meaning. The etymological connections of *äcol* would support a meaning ‘stirred, excited’, and the sense ‘troubled by fear’ could be secondary. ON *eikinn* (poetic) ‘vehement, wild’ is used of fire, and the same word is applied in mod. Icel. to frenzied cattle. This branch of meaning would give ‘delirious’ rather than ‘awed’.

580 ff. Although the poet treated his main source very freely, the confusion in these closing lines is suspicious. The gathering and distribution of booty is deduced from the statement of Exod. xiv. 31, that the Israelites saw the Egyptians dead on the shore. Yet this fact is never actually expressed. *Da was edfynede* is a natural opening for a short paragraph, yet the sentence ends abruptly in the next line. There is no expressed subject for *hofon* 582, which is here very awkward. It is difficult to resist the feeling that words have been corrupted, perhaps whole lines omitted. It seems as if the exemplar was in a poor state near the end of the poem.
Index to Commentary

References to emended forms are italicized; * denotes a reconstructed form.

Abra(ha)am 65
Æcol aj. 78–9
æf-/of- pref. 72
æflæst n. 72
æfter prp. (temporal) 48; (succession) 64
ægnian vb. 59
æl- pref. ‘whole, entirely’ 41
ælfaru f. 41
ælfýlce n. 41
ærdæg m. 53
ærglæd aj. 61
Æðan 41
æðelof f. 65
ægåétan vb. 75
aj. + noun in compounds 48, 63
ælesen(e) ptc. 52
ælh m. 63, 66
æn/on prp. 62
æn(d)bíd n. 76
ændwige n. 48
ængertrum n. 63
ænmød aj. 54
an twig 48
atol aj. 70
æwyrded ptc. 76
æwyrged ptc. 76

bælc m. 42
bælca m. 42
bænsian vb. 72
be prp. 62
bœcsna n. g. pl. 57
bealusō m. 36
bēam m. ‘light-ray’ 45; ‘tree, pillar’ 45, 58
bebead ptc. sg. 44
behealdan vb. 44
behwylfan vb. 68
belced- aj. pref. 42
belúcan vb. 70
bēme/býme f. 54–5
bœghata 59
beorg m. 46
beorhhlīðu n. pl. 42, 69
bēg sēm tÆonum av. phrase 68
bestēman vb. 70
bewegen ptc. (BMaid 183) 51
bīdan vb., prt. sg. bād 77, prt. pl.
  bidon (*beodon/*biudon) 50, 57
blāc aj. 54
blæc aj. 54
blæd m. 62
blæst m. 61
blænd n. 62
bôcere m. 76
boda m. 57
bodhāta m. 59
bœrdhrēoða m. 55
bōsum m. 74
bœðan vb. 46
bregdan vb. 46, 69–70
brim n. 61, 74
bryttian vb. 65
burhhlēðu 42
cæallian vb. 58
čēs aj. 50
cinbeorg f. 51
cist f. 55
cunnan (rēd) vb. 59
cūð aj. 53. 55
cwyl-d- aj. prefix, cf. ON kveld 50
cyre f. 71

dǣdlēan n. 48
  dǣdweorc 78
daēgsceald m. 42
  daēgweorc n. 47, 78
daēd m. 74
daēwigfēðera aj. 49
daēwigscēaft m. 63
dēofolgyld n. 39
dēop aj. 62, 74
descriptive style in short sentences 46, 70, 73
dręncæfod m. 65
drōgan vb. 39
drōsan vb. 38
drihtnēcas m. pl. 49
dryrmyde 38
drysmian vb. 38

eac = e āc av. 53
ead = ēađe av. (JUL 352) 52
eal ðj 37, 52, 74
earu aj., cf. ON œrr, OS aru 63
eċe ræd m. 75
ecg. f. (plural use) 67
eċness f. 60
ed- prefix 77
eftwyrd f. 77
egesa m. 54
Egypta m. g. pl. 68
ele- /el- prefix ‘alien’ 41
eoforth ðēl n. 49
ēoredycst f. 55
eorp aj. 53
-œs/-as in verse 53
Ethan 39, 41, 43
Ethan 41, 58

fēcen n. 39
fēge aj. ‘afraid’ 50
feæger / fiæger aj. 78
fæsten f. 39
fah aj. 77
fana m. 57
fela / feola indecl. 38; usage of 40
felamōdig aj. 40
feldhūs n. 43
feng m. 57
feorhleān n. 48
ferhōbana m. 66
féđa m. 55
fédegást m. 72
flāh aj. 56
ME flēn OE *flēan vb. ‘deceive’ 56
flōdblac aj. 54
flōdweg m. 46
flota m. 46
folcrist f. 37
forht and fēge ajs. 50
forscūfan vb. 54
ford heoran av. 60
forðhere m. 55
forwegen ptc. (BMAld 228) 51, 74
frēcne av. 41
freme aj. 37
frēo aj. 37
fremaj 37
frið / friðód f. 67–8
frið m. 67
friðu / friðoðu / friðoðu m. 67
from / fram aj. 37
fús aj. 57, 66
fyrst 66

galan vb. 78
gamol aj., cf. ON gamall 59
gārbēam m. 57
gārholt m. 49
gāst / gāst m. 50, 72
gēbād = gebēad ptc. sg. 53
gedrected ptc. 38
gedrecte 74
gedrenced ptc. 38
gedrectne ptc. sg. 74
gedrīmost aj. 42
gēfegon ptc. pl. 78
gēhnegan vb. 46, 51
gēnāgan vb. 46
gēnēop ptc. sg. 72
genǣðon ptc. pl. 41
genyddon 41
gēmor aj. 68
gērīdan vb. 57
gerīman vb. 60, 72–3
gēscēadan vb. 74
gest / giest / gyst m. 50, 72
gewadan vb. tr. 70
gewegan vb. (BEow 2400) 51, 74
gewuna aj. 72
giēðu f. 76
gin n. 68
ginfæst aj. 76
glæd aj. 61
greēne grund m. 62
INDEX TO COMMENTARY

grētan vb. ‘approach, accost’ 38;
‘sirnmon’ 55; ‘grasp, handle’ 57
grymetian vb. 67
gūdyst f. 55
Gūdmyrece m. pl. 40
gysteole m. 76

habban vb. ‘put on’ 55
hādētstāpā m. 45
hagu-/hægsteald m. 62–3
hār aj. 52
basu aj. 60
hē pron. m. pl. (hī/hē) 49; hēo 48
hēaf/hēof m. ‘grief, lamentation’ 39
helpend m. 73
hēofonbēacen n. 46, 58
heorufēdm m. 74
heoruwulftas m. pl. 52
heresct f. 55
herefugolas m. pl. 49
herestrēct f. 60
herewīsa m. 62
he(a)rg m. ‘heathen temple’ 38–9
hīht m. 67
hildecalla m. 58
hleahtorsmið m. 38
hlēow aj. 74
holt n. 49
hōs f. (Beow 924) 63
hrēman vb. 78
hrēðan vb. 78
hrīð f., ON hrīð (Wand 102) 59, 63
hwēlmerle m. 49
hwearfan vb. 49
hwonne ej. ‘until’ 57; indir.
interrog. 72
hwōpan vb. 49, 69, 72
hwreopan 49
hwyrft m. 54

incǣde 48, 52, 68
infin. for concomitant action 67
infin. without expressed subj. 36
infection of weak nouns 37
ingefolc n. 48, 52
ingenemen m. pl. 48, 52
ingēpōde f. pl. 68
ingere 37

inhere m. 48
instr. dat. 51, 55
instr. dir. obj. 69
intercalated sentence 46

kenning 44, 49, 73

lērig m. 56
lǣstan vb. 56, 62
lār f. 67
lāst/lāst m. 61
latbēow m. 45
lēan n. 48
lēod m. 59
lēodfruma m. 65
lēodgeard m. 39
lēodweard m. 39
licwund n. 56
līf n. 75
līfweg m. 45
līfwynn f. 75
Welsh llurig f. 56
lyft f. 76
lyftedoras m. pl. 57
lyftweg m. 45

mǣgburge f. pl. 64–5
magorēswan m. pl. 37
mānsceafa m. 38
māre av. ‘more, further’ 54
maðm m. 48
mēagol aj. 76
meaht- aj. pref. 48
mearchof f. n. pl. 40
mearcbrēat m. 51
meoringa 40
merekwærfl m. 75
meretorht aj. 63
metre 48, 51, 52, 54, 67, 70, 74, 76, 78
mid pp. w. acc. 59
mid him phrase 54
mihtmōd n. 48
mislēcra aj. 65
mislic aj. 65
mīšan vb. 75
mōrheald aj. 40
Moyses 45
müðhēl n. 77
Myrce m. pl. 40
nacod aj. 72
nē m., cf. ON när 49
nearwe av. 41-2
néid- aj. pref. (Bede’s Death Song) 47
nép aj. 71
net n. 53
niðboda m. 72
niwe aj. 65
nū correl. 60
numbers in armies 52, 55
nyð- aj. prefix 72
nyðan vb. ‘dare’ 41

ofcr prp. w. acc. (localized) 59, 77
ōht f. 47
on av. 53
on bogum 74
ōnnettan vb. 62
onheldon prt. pl. 39
on helle 39
on langne lust av. phrase 39
onnīed f. 47
onrīht aj. 65
orðanc m. 65
Ōðinn 50
ōðrum wordum phrase 78
ōðpāh prt. sg. 63

pæd m. 73
participial agent-nouns, inflection of 67
p. ptc. uninflected 37
pres. ptc. in -endei-ende 70
pres. ptc. uninflected 45
‘Prophecies’ for Holy Saturday 64, 69
pref. subj. pl. in -e 49, 56

rād f. 44
rand m. ‘shield’ 71; ‘border’ 71
randburh f. 71
randgebeorh n. 61, 71
regn- aj. pref., cf. ON regin, OS
ragino giscapu 76-7
regnian vb., cf. Goth raginnōn 77
rēodan vb., cf. ON rjōða 67
rīdan vb. ‘move to and fro’ 67
rūn f. 76

sacrifice 66
sæbéorg n. 68
sæcir m. 61
sēlan vb. 60
sēleoda = sælida m. 65
sand n. 68
sanges m. g. sg. 62
scacan ‘shake down’ 51
scead n. 42
scyldhrēoda m. 45
scyldtruma m. 45
sē/sēo pron. (as relative) 66
searonet n. 53
searu n. 71
segl m. 42, 46
segm n. or m. 46
segncyning 51
sēgon prt. pl. 51
seledrēmas m. pl. 38
setgang m. 44
sethrād f. 44
sige- aj. pref. 51, 66
Sigelheawas m. pl. 41, 42, 63
Sigelwaras m. pl. 40, 42
sigetīber n. 66-7
singan vb. 49
sīðboda m. 57
sīðdān ... 8a correl. cjs. 43
spillan vb. 75
spīnan vb. 61
spor n. 56
sporman vb. 61
standan vb. ‘be imminent’ 47, 54, 70
storm m. 70
styrman vb. 70
substitution of synonym 38, 51, 67, 71
sund n. 61
sū̄wind 61
swā av. 39
swēð m. swaðu f. 63
*swīþian vb. 71
SYNE/SCONE burh 66
INDEX TO COMMENTARY

tān m. 60

tenses of past time 37, 51, 60

to ārdæge av. phrase 53

pā ... siddan correl. cjs. 43

banon av. ‘then, next’ 75

bēodmearc f. 49

bēodscipe m. 76

brosm m. 38

brymm m. 77

brysman vb. 38

under prp. ‘within, in the shelter of’ 55

ungēara av. 37

ungrundes 74

unhlēow aj. 74

unriime aj. 74

uppe av. 57

ūrigfedera m. 49

waelcēasega m. 50

waelcryige f., cf. ON valkyrja 50

waelhlenc f. 51

waelmist m. 70

waelnet n. 53

wādand vb. 73

wāmm m. or n. 76

wād f. 73

wēa m. 47

wealftāsten n. 60

wealhstod m. 75

weallan vb. 73

weard m. 55, 75-6

weard f. 74

wearg m. 76

wederwolcen n. 58

wegan vb. ‘strike’; cf. ON vega, and
gewegan (Beow 2400), forwegen,
gewegen 51, 74

we gan vb. ‘carry, move’ 51

wēna m. ‘expectation’ 51

werbeamas 73

werge aj. m. pl. 73

werian vb., ‘clothe, wrap’ 53;
 ‘defend, ward off’ 53

wērig aj. 73

wic n. 46

wicing m. 63

Wǣcingas m. pl. 63

widdre and siddre av. phrase 68

wiga m. 61

wigan vb. (Beow 2509, BMald 126) 51, 74

wigblāc aj. 54

wigend m. 51

wigend m. 51, 56, 63

willan vb. (in future sense) 59

witan vb. w. predic. acc. 67

witod aj. 77

witrod 73

wiōerttrod n. 73

wiōefaran vb. 78

wiōerian vb. 78

Wōden 50

wonn aj. 49

word-order 51, 63

wracu f. 66

wracc m. or n. 66

wræcelic aj. 36-7

wrætlictic aj. 36-7

wrēgan vb. 48

wrōhte f. 48

wyrd f. 72, 77

wyrgan vb. 54

ylde m. pl. 68; yðal-og pl. 37

ymb prp. ‘after’ 40; ‘concerning’ 48

ympwician vb. 41

yppinge 74

yrringa av. 74